"THE OPPOSITE OF SEX"

an original screenplay

by

Don Roos

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FADE IN:

INT. DEDEE MACON'S BEDROOM, SMALL TOWN LOUISIANA - DAY

Noon. DEDEE MACON is 16. Fifteen was her year of firsts: date, tattoo, blow-job -- all on the same night. Now she's up to her third tattoo and her whatever blow-job, all before she's gotten to the Civil War in school. She's running around her small, untidy bedroom, struggling into a tight, low-cut dress. She studies herself in the mirror. She leans in to flick her nipples through the thin cloth of her dress. Then she looks up into the mirror to check if her nose is clean. It's not; she takes care of it quickly. She frowns, then puts on sunglasses. She talks tough. For her, tough is the opposite of lonely, so she works at it.

DEDEE (V.O.)
If you're one of those people who don't like movies where some person you can't see talks the whole time and covers up all the holes in the plot and at the end says, "I was never the same again after that summer" or whatever, like it was so deep they can't stand it, then you're out of luck. Things get very complicated very quick, and my guess is you're not up to it without me talking. My name is Dedee Macon, I'm 16, and this is Crevecoeur, Louisiana, which is French I think for like, Fucked Heart.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dedee, in her tight dress and high heels, watches as a coffin is lowered into the ground. Next to her is her mother, BOBETTE KULP, trying her best to look like Jackie getting off Air Force One right after the coffin. Bobette reaches down, gently tosses a clump of dirt onto the lowering coffin. She turns to Dedee, whispers something to her. Dedee bends down, grabs a clump of clay, and hurls it into the grave. Then another clump, then a folding chair, then three vases of flowers. Her mother starts screaming, restrains her. No one is scandalized. These two have a reputation.

DEDEE (V.O.)
My stepfather was a real asshole. To get cancer of the ass was like, poetic. Almost as good as cancer of the dick, if they have that.

INT. DEDEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

Dedee sits on her bed smoking; Bobette's in the doorway, drink and TV Guide in hand. They have an unfriendly conversation till Bobette leaves. Dedee waits, then grabs a packed duffel from under the bed. One more thing: she goes to her night stand and takes out a gun. She buries this in the duffel.

DEDEE (V.O.)
My mother was the kind of mother who always said she was her daughter's best friend. Whenever she did I thought, great, not only do I have a shitty mother but my best friend's a loser-bitch. She was all over me the day we buried Les. She said she was going to lean on me now that he was dead and her heart was wore out. Believe me, if Les wore out anything of hers it wasn't her heart. I had to get out of there. Oh, this part where I take the gun is like, duh. Important. It comes back later but I'm putting it here for foreshadowing, which we covered when we did Dickens, along with which person it is, first, second, third, you know. A lot of this is gonna be first person, for reasons I already went into.

EXT. KULP HOUSE, CREVECOEUR - NIGHT

A 17-year-old boy, RANDY, is walking back to his car when the front door of the house opens quietly and Dedee runs out. He's pissed, Dedee's anxious to keep him quiet; she looks back at the house to make sure they're not being watched.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Randy was a geek, but he was nicer than a lot of the guys mostly because he was born with only one ball, and he was pretty nice to anyone who'd sleep with him and not make fun of it. You had to ignore the Christian stuff.

EXT. FREEWAY TO NEW ORLEANS, LA - NIGHT

Randy's car takes the exit marked "DOWNTOWN".

DEDEE (V.O.)
I told him I was going to my grandma's in Memphis...

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

Randy gives Dedee a silver cross on a chain. She smiles, trying not to roll her eyes, then gives him a big kiss. She's standing in front of a Memphis bus, wants him to leave her there, waves him away. He doesn't want to. She pushes him away, flips him the bird. Pissed off, he leaves. She shoulders her backpack, walks towards a bus marked "Chicago".

DEDEE (V.O.)
...but where I was really going was Indiana to see my brother Bill, who was really only my half-brother, and who I'd seen like once before when I was a kid, a couple years after my real dad died. Bill's like dozens of years older than me and an actual real-life homo, and a teacher, which is kind of gross, I mean the combo, but he had money from his last boyfriend, who died of AIDS, natch, and I needed a place to get my shit together.

INT. BUS - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Dedee is sitting next to an old man who is snoring and leaning into her. She is using the silver cross to pick chewing gum off the seat in front of her. She elbows the old man sharply in the side, twice. He moves to another seat.

DEDEE (V.O.)
If you think I'm just plucky and scrappy and all I need is love, you're in over your head. I don't have a heart of gold and I don't grow one later, okay?

EXT. BUS STATION, SOUTH BEND, INDIANA - DAY

Dedee goes to the phone booth, looks up a number.

DEDEE (V.O.)
But relax, there's other people a lot nicer coming up. We call them losers.

EXT. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD, SOUTH BEND - DAY

Old homes, built for the Studebaker executives when the plant was in production. Sidewalks, tricycles, picket fences.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Look at this. It's the fucking City of Trikes.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Dedee walks up the path to one of these homes, rings the bell. After a moment, a good-looking young man, no Einstein and no need to be, opens the door. This is MATT DIFONZO. He's in workout clothes, well-used and sweaty. Hot.

MATT
Hello.

DEDEE
(puzzled)
You're not Bill...

MATT
I'm Matt. Bill's at school. Are you one of his students?
(friendly, conspiratorial)
'Cause he doesn't really like his students coming here.

DEDEE
I'm his sister.

MATT
Oh.

Now he brings up the arm that's been hidden behind the door; we see he's on the phone.

MATT
(into phone)
Call you back.
(he hangs up)
I didn't know he had a sister.

DEDEE
Who are you?

MATT
Boyfriend.

Dedee's face is eloquent: Yuck.

DEDEE
Can I come in? I'm a real relation.

A school bell rings from the next scene.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL MEN'S ROOM - DAY

BILL MACON enters. Mid-thirties, the still waters type. Maybe he's a pushover; maybe he just picks his fights. It's hard to tell looking at him what he likes in bed, or with

whom, but you get the idea whatever he likes he likes a lot. Students are smoking and horsing around.

BILL
Hey. Butts out. Come on.

We hear the words, "Mr. Macon." The kids obey, even if slowly. One of them mutters, "Asshole". One boy stays behind, leaning against the wall. Bill notices he's got a pen in his hand. The kid's name is JOE.

BILL
Joe? You holding up that wall?

JOE
It's just... I can't go if anyone's around.

Bill has noticed the pen in Joe's hand. He looks at Joe, who moves aside reluctantly. Bill squints at the adolescent graffiti on the wall. It reads, "MR. MACON SUCKS IT HARD. EVERY TUESDAY AFTER YEARBOOK HERE." Bill looks at this a long moment. He knows what the world's capable of calamity-wise, and this isn't close. Joe won't meet his eyes.

BILL
There's a sentence here that's a fragment. What is it?

Joe is scared this is a trick.

BILL
"Every..."

JOE
"Every Tuesday after yearbook here."

BILL
How would you take care of that?

JOE
Well, you could say, "Mr. Macon... you know, blanks it hard here every Tuesday after yearbook."

BILL
Or just "Tuesdays after yearbook." You don't need the "every". Right?

JOE
Yeah, I guess so. Can I go?

He hands Bill the pen, scampers out. Bill sees some more graffiti -- a line drawing of a naked woman. He tries

rubbing it off; it doesn't rub off. He uses his pen to turn it into a picture of a bearded man. When he steps back to admire it, he sees another kid, TY, reading the first graffiti -- and seeing Bill with the green pen in his hand.

TY
It's probably not a good idea to use your real name.

BILL
No, it's not --

Suddenly, over the LOUDSPEAKER:

LOUDSPEAKER
Telephone call for Mr. Macon.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY (M.O.S.)

MUSIC UP. Bill is hurrying to his car.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY (M.O.S.)

Bill drives up; Matt meets him at the car. Together they talk as they walk into the house.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (M.O.S.)

Bill makes his way through the house until he finds Dedee in the kitchen, staring out the window over the back lawn down to the river. He says her name; she turns around. Her eyes are red, tearful. She waits a beat, then rushes to him, throws her arms around him. Matt watches, moved. We see Bill's face as he embraces her; he's kind of confused, almost guilty. Then we see hers.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Can you believe this kitchen? Boy do they love kitchens. The dead guy really was loaded. I'd already worked on the beautiful dumb one. He helped out.

We see Matt explaining things to Bill; Bill resisting; Dedee chiming in eagerly...

DEDEE (V.O.)
I laid it on kind of thick about Mom drinking and how tough it was on me watching my step-dad die, which was like so opposite, and how it would give Mom and me a chance to grieve in our own ways if there was a little distance between us.

Matt pleads with Bill. He's hard to resist.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Just for the summer. Plus I'd clean for them, or tell their maid places she missed. Bill was like the definition of a softie.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Dedee is on the phone to her mother. Bill paces.

DEDEE
Okay. Okay, I promise. Okay. Bye, Mom. Yeah, here he is.

She hands the phone to Bill.

BILL
(into phone)
Hello? Hello, Bobette. I'm sorry about your loss. Yeah. Well, no one has it coming... Okay. Well, anyway... I can't hear you. No, it's just the ice against the glass, I guess. Uh-huh. Yeah, sure. I wasn't expecting -- oh he did? I don't know if he can get her a job, he's only the assistant manager... It's a Kinko's, it's nice. Uh-huh. Okay, okay, we'll be in touch. Right. Bye-bye.

He hangs up. A beat.

BILL
Whoa.

DEDEE
She said I could stay till the end of the summer, right?

BILL
She's taking it hard. The death.

DEDEE
Taking it hard, yeah.

SUBLIMINAL CUT: BOBETTE AND SOME GUY

rolling around on a bed.

BACK TO SCENE

BILL
Last time I saw you and your mom you were five. Dad's funeral.

DEDEE
I appreciate this, Bill. Really. I won't be in the way.

BILL
Hey. Family.

He kisses her, leaves. She goes to the door, peers out. SHE SEES Bill and Matt in the hallway, heads together. Matt's just showered; he's got a towel around his waist. Bill's arm is on Matt's shoulder. It's a good pair of shoulders, a good back. Dedee smiles.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Matt didn't look like a fairy at all. But it wasn't hard to see why he'd screw around with Bill. It was a great house. And a blow-job is a blow-job, if you're getting one. You could imagine it was a woman. If you're giving one, it's harder, but even so... It's like Rule One about sex: if you don't breathe in, a person can do almost anything for ten minutes. Everything was going great until she showed up.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

MUSIC. LUCIA (pronounced LOOSHA) DALURY pulls up in her car. She slams the door shut. Not even 35, she already yells out her window when kids cut across her lawn. It's her sincere belief that happy people aren't paying attention. She heads into the house.

INT. BILL'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

In the b.g. we can see Lucia arguing with Bill and Matt in the kitchen. Meanwhile, Dedee, in the living room, examines the photos on the mantel, occasionally looking towards the kitchen and Lucia.

DEDEE (V.O.)
The sister of the dead guy. That's how Bill met him. She teaches next to him and one day she introduces him to her brother. This is like eight years ago.

We see older photos of Bill and Tom -- Lucia's brother. Ten years ago. A younger Lucia. Moving into the house. Dog. Then a picture of Tom, much much thinner.

DEDEE (V.O.)
She probably thought they could, you know, fish or play ball together, and they end up with their dicks in each other's mouth. She looked like she never got over it. Face like a cat's ass.

Dedee finds an urn on a shelf. She looks inside.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Gross. But notice how pretty the jar is. That's typical gay.

EXT. YARD - TABLE AND CHAIRS - DECK - NIGHT

The deck of Bill's house, built overlooking the river. Dedee is finishing her plate of pasta. Lucia is trying to like her. She's just been asked how to say her name.

LUCIA
Lucia. Lucia Dalury.

DEDEE
It's weird. How do you spell it?

LUCIA
L-U-C-I-A. It should be Lu-chee-a, but when I was a kid learning how to spell, I figured out they were saying it wrong. Because my sisters were named Marcia and Tricia. You know, C-I-A, "SHAH". So I figured my name should be pronounced Loosha. And it stuck. I kind of like it now.

DEDEE
(as if Lucia couldn't be more pathetic)
Yeah. Makes you different. Do you have a cigarette?

LUCIA
No.

DEDEE
Matt told me about your brother and Bill. Sorry he's dead. Did he give it to Bill?

LUCIA
What? I'm... that's none of your business.

DEDEE
Well it is, kind of. I mean, I might drink out of the same cup accidentally or something. If I stay for awhile.

LUCIA
What do they teach you in Louisiana?

DEDEE
(not insulted)
It's roughly like "God works in mysterious ways." If you get my drift.

LUCIA
You don't get it from cups. Anyway, they're both negative. Do you know what negative means?

DEDEE
Bill's kind of cute, isn't he? Even though he's old.

LUCIA
(protesting)
He's thirty-five.

DEDEE
(not taking that as a contradiction)
Yeah. But he's kind of cute. He looks like my father. I have a picture.

Dedee fishes in her wallet and drags out a color snapshot wrapped in Saran. She shows it to Lucia.

DEDEE
He married Bill's mom first. Then he fell in love with Miss Selectric. She typed 145 words a minute and went around the country demonstrating Selectrics in tight sweaters. You know, before computers. There's a picture of her in the manual. Dad met her when they lived in Akron. When that broke up he married my mom. That's the one that killed him.

LUCIA
Yeah, you can see the resemblance.

Dedee is watching her, and watches her when she looks up to see Bill coming towards them carrying a thermos and a column of styrofoam cups. Matt follows behind, watching Dedee.

DEDEE
Too bad he's a fairy, right?

Lucia looks at Dedee, alarmed at her perspicacity.

LUCIA
I wouldn't put it like that.

DEDEE
Well, then, too bad he's the way you'd put it.

Dedee smiles at Matt as he brings out a tray of coffee.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Matt worked the night shift at Kinko's most of the time, so he didn't go in until 4:00. We hung out a lot.

EXT. BILL'S BACKYARD - POOL - DAY

Dedee sits at the end of the pool, her legs in the water, and eats cheeseburgers from a takeout bag as she watches Matt swim. He's got one of those bodies that respond to ten sit-ups and once in a while not having cake.

DEDEE (V.O.)
He was like a blind person, you know? They can't see but they hear real well. Matt couldn't think at all, but he looked great. It's survival. Cute stupid people survive and have lots of cute stupid babies who also survive. It was like watching evolution at work -- as long as he reproduced.

Matt hoists himself out of the pool, sits next to her, grabs some fries from her bag.

MATT
So we figured, what the hell, and I moved in here. That was a year ago this June.

DEDEE
So it's like... if you were normal, you'd be in love?

MATT
We are normal. But I don't know. In love. He's like... I think he was in love with Tom.

DEDEE
You knew him?

MATT
No. Just from what his sister says. Bill doesn't talk about him.

DEDEE
He's like, what? Twenty years older than you?

MATT
Nine. Sometimes ten, depending on the month.

DEDEE
So. Have you always been a 'mo?

MATT
I guess, yeah.

DEDEE
You never slept with a girl?

MATT
Nope. It never came up.

DEDEE
So to speak, right? Good one.

Matt looks puzzled.

MATT
It's just not for me.

DEDEE
How do you know if you never tried it?

MATT
I never tried Communism but I know I wouldn't like that. It's the same thing. Or grits.

DEDEE
Have you ever had sex with a black person?

MATT
No.

DEDEE
Because you know you wouldn't like it.

MATT
I don't know that.

DEDEE
So even though you've never tried either, you'd have sex with a black person but not with me. God. That's like reverse discrimination. Quotas.

MATT
Is it?

DEDEE
Yeah. You're not giving white people a chance. You'd probably sleep with a Communist black person before a girl like me. It's prejudiced. Would you mind?

She's on her back. She hands him the lotion. He puts it on her back. The top of her swimming suit is undone. Suddenly, she rolls over on her back, exposing her breasts to him.

MATT
You can reach there yourself.

DEDEE
Scared you'll get a woody?

MATT
Look, Dedee, you're really nice, but I'm gay --

DEDEE
(holding up her forefinger)
Theory.

MATT
Whatever, and you're my boyfriend's sister.

DEDEE
Half-sister. Look, I get it, okay? If I were you, and I had this great set-up, and the guy I was with was like fifteen years older than me, and all I had to do was blow him a couple times a year, I wouldn't rock the boat either. You're a homo. Fine. Whatever. Like I give a shit.

She closes her eyes, lies back on the bricks. Matt's thinking.

MATT
Nine, ten at the most. Years older.

DEDEE
He could be your father. You are basically blowing your father. That can't feel right.

MATT
I never knew my father.

DEDEE
You really think this is a good way to make up for it?

She puts on some lip gloss with her eyes closed. Matt watches her, thinking...

INT. MISHAWAKA HIGH SCHOOL - FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Couple weeks later. End-of-school-year bulletins on the board. Bill's eating peanut butter and jelly and correcting papers. He doesn't look too happy. Lucia comes in, sees him, crosses to the window, pulls it open, lights a cigarette. On the sill outside are lots of butts.

LUCIA
You look like shit.

BILL
You have the window behind you.

Lucia studies him.

LUCIA
We both know what's going on, right? We both know what she's up to.

BILL
Who?

LUCIA
Dedee. Delta Dawn. God, Bill, don't you ever get tired of denial?

BILL
It kind of grows on you, as the years go by. Like disco.

LUCIA
You could send her back home. Not could, should. You're a teacher. She's a 16-year-old girl who should be in school somewhere. You're contributing to truancy.

BILL
We're out in three weeks.

LUCIA
She's running around town unsupervised... And she's a bad influence on Matt.

BILL
Matt's twenty-six.

LUCIA
Mentally? Emotionally? It's reverse dog years. You divide by seven. He's what -- three-and-a-half.

BILL
You never liked him.

LUCIA
He's not on your level. He doesn't know Japan's an island, for God's sake. He thinks the periodic table is something you teach in sex ed.

BILL
An archipelago. I think you can get through life without knowing Japan's an archipelago.

LUCIA
How you could go from Tom to him...

BILL
We're not going to have this discussion again.

LUCIA
No, what do I know about romance? I'm just the fag hag, right? I hate that.

BILL
Nobody uses that term anymore.

LUCIA
Tom used to.

BILL
We have a new word for women who prefer gay men to straight. It's "women".

LUCIA
Funny. Maybe you'd better start thinking of a word for women who are so fed up with gay men and their obsession with sex sex sex --

BILL
We do. It's "lesbian". Come on. Matt's a good guy.

LUCIA
Your standards are so low. You're just like straight men. You think with your dicks.

BILL
You think it's all about sex, me and Matt?

LUCIA
(making a joke so as not to answer)
You eat ice cream too fast, your crotch aches.

BILL
Tom was great, Tom was terrific, that's who we were, Tom Terrific and Manfred the Wonder Dog, but he's dead. And you gotta move on.

LUCIA
You don't have to tell me he's dead.

BILL
And you don't have to tell me Matt's not Tom, okay?

The BELL RINGS. Bill gathers his papers and heads out. Lucia yells after him.

LUCIA
You don't see what you don't want to see!
(when he keeps going)
Shit!

DEDEE (V.O.)
Could she be a bigger bitch? She called me the Swamp Thing once. You know what she needs, but who'd do it? So anyway, I'm there a month now, and things have developed...

INT. DEDEE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Late afternoon. Dedee and Matt are making love.

DEDEE (V.O.)
I know AIDS is like, awful and shit, and that guy who got all those boys up to his room and ate them and froze them and then he got killed in prison, like we cared, I mean, all that is disgusting. But they do look better than straight people. And smell better. They're cleaner, if you don't count viruses, and there's not all that hair in their ears and noses and shit. So it evens out. Anyway, Matt wasn't totally faggy. I mean, he knew what to do with it, believe me.

BEDROOM - LATER

It's dusk outside. Matt is staring up at the ceiling. Dedee looks at him.

DEDEE
I got bad news.

MATT
What?

DEDEE
I'm late.

MATT
Oh. Okay, I'll drive you.

DEDEE
No, I'm late. Like my period is late. Do you know what that means?
(off Matt's look)
I'm pregnant. We're pregnant.

MATT
You... you're kidding. We've been using condoms... Are you sure?
(after a beat)
Is it mine?

DEDEE
See? Only straight boys ever say that line. You're in, man.

MATT
No, I mean, don't get my hopes up if you're not sure.

Dedee looks at him. He wants the kid?

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Seen from outside; we gradually approach the living room. We see an argument inside; hear voices...

DEDEE (V.O.)
We were going to break it to them in stages. One, we were in love. Two, surprise! We'd just gotten to stage one when Lucia dropped by. Typical. Like it was any of her business...

INT. BILL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bill, Lucia, Matt, Dedee. Bill looks like the world's caved in on him. That, and pissed.

LUCIA
(to Dedee)
I knew you were trouble. This is your brother here!
(turning to Matt)
And you! How could you?

MATT
It just happened. We didn't mean to hurt anyone.

LUCIA
You're gay, you jerk.

DEDEE
He just hadn't met the right woman.

LUCIA
Yeah, one with a dick.

DEDEE
Is that a cut?

MATT
For your information, I'm bi-sexual.

LUCIA
Yeah, and I voted for Bush once, so I'm bipartisan. Please. Who says that bi-sexual shit besides gay men? I mean, in the history of recorded speech?

MATT
I'd understand if we couldn't go on living here.

LUCIA
You'd get that, huh? Congratulations.

MATT
It's just with the baby and all, it'd be easier.
(a beat as he takes in their expressions)
Oh shit, that's not how we were gonna tell you.
(to Dedee)
Sorry.

BILL
You're pregnant?

DEDEE
It was going to be a surprise.

Everyone looks at Bill. He sits down.

LUCIA
Do you want an abortion?

MATT
No! God. Look, Bill, if we could stay here till we get married and the baby comes...

DEDEE
Who said anything about getting married?

MATT
You don't want to get married?

DEDEE
You don't want to rush into something like that.

LUCIA
No, but bringing another human life onto the planet, that's Whim Time.
(to Bill)
Am I the only one here who wants to kill someone?

DEDEE
You wish.

Bill stands up, looks at Matt. A moment, then:

BILL
I'll talk to you all tomorrow. I'm beat.

MATT
Bill --

LUCIA
Bill --

But he walks past them and up the stairs. Matt and Lucia look guilty. Dedee lights a cigarette.

LUCIA
Smoking's bad for the baby.

DEDEE
Like you give a shit. Or maybe somebody else mentioned abortion.

LUCIA
(to Matt)
You're breaking his heart.

MATT
I'm a little late for that.

He leaves, heads upstairs.

DEDEE
Where you going? Matt!

The two women are left alone. Lucia snaps her fingers at Dedee's pack of cigarettes. Dedee passes her one.

LUCIA
At least he knows what Matt's like now. You're probably a blessing in disguise.

DEDEE
God. How does a woman end up so bitter?

LUCIA
(taking a deep drag of her cigarette)
Observation.

INT. MATT & BILL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The master bathroom. Lots of products. Bill's brushing his teeth; his gums'll be bleeding if he doesn't calm down. Behind him in the bedroom Matt is packing a duffel bag. Matt comes into the bathroom to pack his toiletries.

BILL
She's under 17, you know. And she's my sister.

MATT
I didn't take advantage of her.

BILL
She had a death in the family. She came to us for help.

MATT
Dedee said you'd be jealous.

BILL
What?

MATT
I'm going to have a kid. I'm going to have a normal life. And that pisses you off. Misery loves company.

BILL
Normal life? Fuck you, Matt. Fuck you.

MATT
Look, Bill...

BILL
Don't talk. Pack. Pack yourself, pack her, and get the fuck out of here.

He slams the bathroom door shut on Matt. Matt takes a breath.

DEDEE (V.O.)
So we couldn't stay. So he wasn't a total loser. I didn't care. But if we had to get out, let's really get out. I mean, Indiana bit. Hoosier this, losers.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Next afternoon. Bill pulls into the driveway after work.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill enters from the garage. He's calmed down a lot.

BILL
Matt? Dedee?

INT. UPSTAIRS - DAY

Bill opens Dedee's guest room door. It's empty. No suitcase, empty closets. He reaches for the phone. Dials a number. We hear a voice say, "Kinko's."

BILL
Could I speak to Matt? Matt DiFonzo?
(listening)
Did he call in sick?

He listens, hangs up without saying anything.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bill comes downstairs. There's a note on the refrigerator.

DEDEE (V.O.)
I kinda felt sorry for him. I mean, he couldn't help being old. I said he was really nice, and thanks for the hospitality, and I apologized for taking the money, even though I didn't have to. It was Matt's idea, mostly. Oh, and don't tell Mom.

Bill puts the letter down and goes to the bulletin board. There's a ring of keys there. He flips through it. There's a key missing. He picks up the phone. Into it:

BILL
Yeah, business. First Federal.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Here's where he finds out we took the safe deposit money. Ouch. Now he's covering for us, you know, not telling the bank it was unauthorized. Such a nice guy. Love him, hate me, right? People getting dumped are always lovable. Even homos. Wait, I can really lay it on.

The MUSIC GETS STRINGIER. There's a short MONTAGE of Bill sitting alone on his bed, putting his head on the pillow, rolling over to smell Matt on Matt's pillow. Then a PAN down the stairway, and we see pictures of Bill and Matt --

DEDEE (V.O.)
It's just tricks. It doesn't mean he's better than me. But you can't help yourselves. You see someone smell a pillow or an old sweater, you're a basket case. I coulda showed you the other stuff he did, besides mooning around. He ate like a pig, for one.

-- now we see Bill eating, then paying bills.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Like, he licked his plate, I'm not kidding you. He flossed, he trimmed the hair in his ears, he even paid some bills. Does that make your heart break? His boyfriend or whatever leaves and he pays the cable bill? So he wasn't like dying of pain. Even after she showed up.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DECK - NIGHT

Lucia and Bill, drinking coffee.

LUCIA
Did you call the bank? Are you sure?

BILL
Yeah. He signed the safe deposit register at noon.

LUCIA
How much was in it?

BILL
Ten thousand.

LUCIA
Thief.

BILL
Not technically. He was on the signature card.
(picking up the portable phone)
I gotta call her mother. She is a minor.

LUCIA
Wait a couple days. They'll call you -- then you'll have something to tell her. You don't want the police involved. You're a schoolteacher. Come on.

He puts down the phone.

BILL
You're right. She's not my problem anymore. Neither is he. I don't have any problems. I'm fucking problem-free.

LUCIA
You are, Bill. You just don't realize it yet. You'll see.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Late afternoon. Bill's on his way to the car when someone calls his name. Bill turns, sees a guy in his early twenties: JASON BADALIAN. He looks... well, radical. For South Bend. Pierced.

JASON
Mr. Macon?

BILL
Yes?

JASON
What'd you do with Matt?

BILL
Excuse me?

JASON
Matt. Matt DiFonzo. Your boyfriend.
(off Bill's look)
Mine too.

Bill blinks. To buy time:

BILL
Are you a student here?

JASON
Like, four years ago. Look, don't pretend you didn't know about Matt and I. And don't worry, I don't do anything unsafe. I know what your lover died of.

BILL
"About Matt and me."

JASON
I've been trying to call him for the last two days. No answer. He left his job. His car's not at the house. Where is he?

BILL
I have no idea. Now if you'll --

JASON
Hey, don't blow me off! I could make trouble for you. You know? Tell 'em you're gay --

BILL
They know I'm gay, you little prick.

JASON
-- and you came on to me when I was a student here. Do they know that?

BILL
That's a lie.

JASON
Tell me where he is.

Bill looks at him, deciding what to do. Jason is wincing, pulling his jeans away from his crotch.

JASON
New piercing.

BILL
Did he ever mention Dedee to you? My half-sister. She's visiting from Louisiana.

JASON
He's in Louisiana?

BILL
I don't know. But he took off with her. They're in love. That's what he told me. I don't know where he is.

JASON
He's bi? Are you serious?

BILL
We're always the last to know.

JASON
Fuck you. I want to talk to him. If I don't hear from him by Friday, I'm going to the police. For all I know you could have killed him.

BILL
Then for all you know I'm just getting started.

JASON
Get him to call me.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - FROM BACK - NIGHT

The house is lit up and we can see Lucia raging through the picture windows. Bill's trying to calm her down. We CAN HEAR her muffled imprecations. Halfway through her speech a sheriff's car rolls up.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Course he told her. Lucia wasn't surprised that Matt had been screwing around. And the little prick had been in her homeroom for two years. After school he went up to Chicago and became one of those ACT-UP people who think AIDS is like this big conspiracy against homo's. Maybe it is, who knows. All I know is it ain't working. There seem to be more of them now than ever before, you know what I mean? They're tricky. Anyway, Bill tried to convince her it was all a bluff.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bill is helping Lucia on with her coat.

LUCIA
Face it. He's gonna ruin you.

BILL
He just wants to scare me. He's angry. Matt dumped him too.

LUCIA
I don't know how you do it. So nice. So good. Tom was, too. It's depressing.

BILL
You're nice.

LUCIA
That's how I always felt here. Like the Baroness Schrader in "The Sound of Music". Everyone's singing and climbing Alps and all I want to do is pimp-slap that postulant bitch back to the Abbey.

He opens the door to let her out -- and CARL TIPPETT is there in his sheriff's uniform, his hand raised to use the knocker. He's a good tipper, but not so good it's insulting; and he gives the big candy bars on Halloween, never raisins.

CARL
Oh. Lucia. Hi. Hey, Bill. May I come in?

BILL
Sure, sure. Lucia was just leaving.

LUCIA
I can stay --

CARL
Actually, Lucia, it's business.

LUCIA
I'll be in the kitchen.

CARL
Nice to see you again, Lucia. Long time.

LUCIA
Only a year, Carl. At the funeral, remember? Remember Nancy's funeral?

She turns and goes into the kitchen. Bill and Carl look at each other.

CARL
Like I'd forget it. You remember Tom's funeral?

BILL
Yeah.

CARL
Jesus. Anyway... I got a stupid thing here I'm checking out. You know a Jason Badalian?

BILL
Yup. Met him Tuesday.

CARL
Says when he was a student here five years ago, you molested him. I didn't like the look of him, but I gotta do something. I haven't told Walter yet.

BILL
But you'll have to, right? He's the principal. State law.
(pause)
There's something else.

CARL
He filed a missing person's report on Matthew DiFonzo. Where would he be?

BILL
I don't know.

CARL
This Jason creep mentioned something about a sister. I didn't know you had a sister. Half-sister.
(no response)
'Course if you say they moved somewhere, they wouldn't be missing. Even if we can't exactly find them.

BILL
They left me a note but I don't have it anymore. Where does that put us?

Carl sighs, moves to the door.

CARL
Shit, I don't know. Let me know soon as you hear from either of them.

BILL
You haven't asked me if it's true. Maybe I did molest him.

CARL
I'd like to send him someplace where they will, for about five to ten. Might put some sense into him.

BILL
Only if his brain's connected to his ass.

CARL
Strikes me as fairly likely. Take care. We'll keep this under wraps as long as possible. Good night, Lucia. See you around.

The door to the kitchen swings open and Lucia stands there, glaring at him.

BILL
We'll talk tomorrow.

Carl nods, leaves. A beat. Bill turns to Lucia.

LUCIA
This is why I hate people. You always want to know why. Take it in.

BILL
Honey, I'm right there with you. Fuck that singing nun.

EXT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucia walks down the sidewalk, picking up a newspaper as she heads to her station wagon. She puts it on the roof with her coffee cup as she opens the door. It blows off, lands face up NEAR US. We can read the headline: "MISHAWAKA HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER ACCUSED OF MOLESTATION." In lower case, "Admitted Homosexual 10-Year Veteran in System." There's a picture of Bill, smiling.

Lucia COMES TOWARDS US to pick up the paper. O.S. she reads it; then starts running to her car. She backs up quickly; the coffee cup, left on the roof, spins to the ground.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucia pulls up, pushes her way through three or four reporters, some with video cameras. She knocks on the door.

LUCIA
Bill! It's me!
(to the reporters)
You assholes --
(spotting one of them)
Is that you, Jennifer?

JENNIFER, a TV reporter, photogenic and not much else, nods, a little embarrassed.

JENNIFER
Any comment about the charges against Mr. Macon?

LUCIA
(disgusted)
I wrote you a letter of recommendation.

She uses her key, unlocks the door, slams it behind her.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - FOYER, STAIRS - DAY

Bill's coming down the stairs, knotting a tie.

LUCIA
Jesus, Bill -- did you know about this?

BILL
There were messages on my machine. I just heard them this morning. People'll believe anything.

LUCIA
Did you call that lawyer I told you about?

BILL
What for?

LUCIA
Hello? This is America. We don't like sodomy so much here.

BILL
Yeah, but the schools are good. Speaking of which --

LUCIA
You're not going in? Bill!

INT./EXT. BILL'S CAR/HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

A media madhouse. Lucia and Bill get out of the car and brace the crowd. Reporters thrust microphones at them; shout questions. Students watch in whispering, excited groups.

WE FIND a reporter checking her lipstick in the lens of a camera. She backs up, starts speaking:

REPORTER
Tanya and Steve, I'm here at Mishawaka High School where a sex scandal involving a high school teacher whose seeming popularity may have been the cover for his predatory advances upon the young male students entrusted to him by this outraged and devastated community...

TV SCREEN - MONITOR - INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

They're editing this back at the station:

MALE STUDENT #1
I had him for homeroom last year. I felt like, you know, he was undressing me with his eyes? And then he'd like leave me undressed for a good 10, 15 minutes? Or sometimes he'd just put my socks back on?

GIRL STUDENT #1
Yeah, we know, we all know. I mean, hello? But he's not really gay-gay, you know? Not like "Birdcage". It's not like he like, you know, does makeovers on you and shit.

MALE STUDENT #2
I did notice at wrestling matches he was always watching the guys wrestle. But I mean, what else are you gonna watch? That's all there is, this circle with two guys wrestling in it. But maybe that's why he went, you know? Looking back...

GAY MALE STUDENT
What gets me is this idea that a queer teacher does nothing but salivate all day. Because the straight boys are so desirable? Look around. These guys put the job in blow-job, you know what I mean?

MALE STUDENT #1
Yeah, so whatever. So he chugs dick. Can I say that on TV? But you figure for every one he chugs, someone chugs his, so you know, it's not the worst deal in the world.

FEMALE STUDENT #2
This is America, and we're Christian, aside from a few Jewish people, and that religion Tom Cruise is in, and I can tell you one thing, Jesus Christ and his Apostles were certainly not into "man-on-man action", which is how they describe it on their porno videos, which I'm proud to say Blockbuster does not carry. I work there and it's very family.
(beat)
Also John Travolta. The religion.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - OUTER OFFICE - DAY (M.O.S.)

The secretaries are bunched outside the principal's office. They scurry away when the door opens and Bill appears. The PRINCIPAL appears, doesn't look happy at what he has to do, shakes Bill's hand.

INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - DAY (M.O.S.)

Students talking as a substitute writes her name on the board. Suddenly one of the students at the window says something; the rest of the students flock there.

THEIR POV - BILL

walking to his car with boxes. Camera crews documenting it.

TV SCREEN - THAT FOOTAGE

seen on the local TV show. A graphics banner across the bottom: "SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL".

DEDEE (V.O.)
I'm just gonna give you the broad strokes here, because I've got my own problems with Matt which you'll find out about any minute. Bill got suspended with pay. It didn't even bother him.
(MORE)

DEDEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I guess when your first boyfriend, what's-his-name, Tom? croaks in front of you and his stupid sister takes over your life, and then your next boyfriend splits, you're kind of primed for shit. It's hard to top that with suspensions and people hating you and losing a stupid job you're too rich for anyway. Lucia said it was denial, natch, what else? Bill just hired a lawyer, stayed at home, and worked on his garden.

INT. BILL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A rock sails through a window. Several other panes have been replaced with cardboard, and a broom and a dustpan stand ready. Bill, who's sitting in an easy chair, goes over to the rock, picks it up, hefts it in his hand, leaves the room... CAMERA STAYS behind, lingering on the mantel. Some of us notice the urn with Tom's ashes is missing.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - MORNING

The rock slips into place in the hillside rock garden. There's a lot of rocks.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Meanwhile, guess who was having the time of her life? Because her predictions came true. She won. Between the time we left and that stupid phone call, which I can't go into right now, she was flying.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucia, humming, cooks from a book. Later, Lucia watches Bill eat.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Look at the lipstick on her. She better hope it's drool-proof.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

Lucia is filing while Bill pays bills. She finds the manual to the Selectric typewriter. She opens it. There's a caption: "Miss Selectric demonstrates her typing speed of 145 word per minutes. It's easy on a Selectric!" But the face of Miss Selectric has been scratched out.

EXT. BILL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

Lucia and Bill are watching TV. Bill tries to glance at the clock. Lucia is talking.

DEDEE (V.O.)
You don't have to hear any of this -- there's nothing going on here except her trying not to leave. Last night she went through a week of menus with him. Poor guy. Another night like this and he'll put her in the chair by the window.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

DEDEE (V.O.)
Look where she is. Men's Toiletries. The more private the better. You know what she's thinking? If only he had jock itch...

CARL (O.S.)
Lucia?

Lucia, startled out of a reverie, turns to see Carl, the sheriff, smiling at her. The smile's not returned.

LUCIA
Oh, hi, Carl.

She walks on with her cart.

CARL
Hey, what a coincidence. Just talking to Bill. He sounds good.

LUCIA
No thanks to you.

CARL
It wasn't personal, Lucia, you know that.

LUCIA
Oh I do, huh?

CARL
The kid's story's not going to hold up. The board'll clear him.

LUCIA
His reputation's ruined.

CARL
He never gave a shit about reputation.

LUCIA
Then he's got company. Nice seeing you --

CARL
Hey, hang on.
(he's stopped in front of the detergents)
Nancy always bought liquid but the powder's so much cheaper. What do you think?

LUCIA
Why don't you ask someone who gives a shit, Carl. Why don't you ask her nurse?

CARL
Sherry? She...
(realizing)
Oh. So that's it. I didn't figure you for someone who'd listen to gossip.

LUCIA
Suppose you mind your business and I'll mind mine.

She moves off. Carl watches her, thinking.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucia pulls in, the groceries beside her in the front seat. We notice the cardboarded window panes. We HEAR MUSIC drifting from the house. Uncharacteristic.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucia enters. There's loud MUSIC playing.

LUCIA
(calling out)
I'm home! Bill?

Bill appears briefly at the top of the hall, empty suitcase in hand.

BILL
Hey!

Lucia's alarmed. She puts down the groceries.

LUCIA
What are you doing?

BILL
(reappearing)
He called! He fucking called!

Lucia takes a moment, then climbs the staircase.

INT. BILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill, energized, is throwing clothes into a suitcase. His phone is off the hook; the speaker button is lit. He is talking when Lucia enters.

BILL
Yes, from O'Hare to Los Angeles. Tomorrow. Early morning.

OPERATOR
We have flights at 6, 8, 11:30...

BILL
Eight. That's great. What time does that get into L.A.?

OPERATOR
Let's see. 9:30, that's local time.

LUCIA
What the hell is going on?

OPERATOR
I beg your pardon.

LUCIA
Bill.

BILL
(to phone)
I'll call you back.
(he hangs up)
Listen to this.

He presses play on his answering machine.

ANGRY CITIZEN'S VOICE
(filtered)
Hey, is this the faggot? You fucking pervert --

BILL
(pushing a button)
Shit. No, here.

MATT'S VOICE
(filtered)
Hey, Bill? It's me. Are you there? Pick up. Shit. All right, I just wanted to call. I mean, it's been like months. Seems longer. Everything's cool. Maybe you're just listening to this. I can hang here for a while. Here's the number: 213-555-7815. You got that? So it's like 7:15 here, is it two hours different there? Anyway, just thought I'd say hi. Everything's cool. Dedee's getting real big. You should see her stomach. You can see these veins. Ugh. Anyway... Bye.

LUCIA
(after a moment)
Did you call back?

BILL
It's some kind of payphone.
(he grabs a piece of paper from the night stand)
L.A. Corner of Sunset and LaBrea. Like the tar pits. I called Carl. He has this program with all the phone numbers in the U.S.

LUCIA
When?

BILL
I don't know. Maybe an hour ago.

LUCIA
I just saw him at the grocery store.

BILL
Great, great, whatever. So look, can you keep an eye on the house when I'm gone?

LUCIA
You don't know where they're living.

BILL
I'll find them. I found the payphone.

LUCIA
But... why?

BILL
Are you kidding? To drag his sorry ass back here. To make him make that Jason kid take it all back. And to ship Dedee back to her miserable mother whether she likes it or not.

He continues packing, his spirits undiminished.

LUCIA
Just give that number to Jason. That's all he's interested in. He'll drop the charges then. And let her mother go out there and pick her up.

BILL
Hey, this is what I'm doing. I can get someone else to watch the house.

He disappears into the bathroom to pack some toiletries. Lucia thinks. Sighs. Picks up the phone, presses redial. Presses a "1", another "1", in response to a menu. Waits. Bill comes out.

BILL
Your problem is --

He stops as Lucia holds up a hand.

LUCIA
(into phone)
Yeah. I need two tickets tomorrow, O'Hare to Los Angeles. Yeah. Morning. Platt, Lucia. L-U-C-I-A. Hey, guess what, I know how my own name is pronounced. And Macon, Bill. Sure.
(to Bill)
Hey, this is how it's gonna be. Don't piss me off.
(into phone; annoyed)
Coach, what else? You know how much this country pays teachers?

EXT. I-90 - NEAR O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY

Bill's car heads toward the airport. Several car lengths behind them: Carl's car. He's following them.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

EXT. HERTZ LOT, LAX - DAY

Lucia stands at the trunk of a blue Escort while Bill loads their luggage.

LUCIA
What's that smell?

BILL
Air.

LUCIA
Where are we going?

BILL
I know a hotel. Tom and I were here the year before he got sick, remember?

LUCIA
(as she gets into the car)
It's not jet exhaust?

They drive off, passing a taxi -- which then takes after them.

EXT. RAMADA INN, WEST HOLLYWOOD - DAY

INT. RAMADA INN, WEST HOLLYWOOD - CORRIDOR - DAY

Lucia and Bill walk down the hallway. Lucia is aware that every other guest is male. Bill isn't.

INT. LUCIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lucia closes the door behind her, looks at the room.

DEDEE (V.O.)
The thing is, I hate her guts, but there's more to her than meets the eye. Like there could be less. I'm not saying to know her is to love her. I'm saying to know her is to not want to kill her. Like, constantly.

Lucia, fully clothed, lies on the bed, her coat spread out beneath her.

SUBLIMINAL CUTS

Men kissing, stripping, touching, grimacing.

BACK TO LUCIA

She tightens her lips, turns on the TV.

DEDEE (V.O.)
I know what you're thinking. She's like... so dead. But she had a life once. She just... I don't know. Stopped feeding it. So after a while it wandered away.

HOME MOVIES - SUPER 8

Three girls, one of them fat, all under ten, dressing up a baby brother in a dress and high heels. The two girls are close to ten; the fat girl and the boy are more like five.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Marcia, Tricia, Lucia, Tom.

HOME MOVIES - VIDEO

Marcia's and Tricia's weddings. In both of them, Lucia is a bridesmaid. Tom is an usher. Handsome.

DEDEE (V.O.)
She had a crush on him or something. Sick.

18-year-old Lucia watches him talking to a girl at the wedding banquet.

DEDEE (V.O.)
This is just like in "The Godfather". Watch.

INT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSE - BASEMENT - RECEPTION

18-year-old Lucia comes downstairs, still in her bridesmaid dress, now wrinkled and stained with cake, carrying another piece of it. She sits down in the paneled basement, smokes a cigarette. Then she hears something which we don't. It's coming from a door. She goes to the door. She frowns. She opens the door slowly, quietly.

WHAT SHE SEES is her brother Tom, his pants around his ankles, on top of an usher. Then Tom looks around, sees Lucia. She's shocked.

DEDEE (V.O.)
You could tell it wrecked her; she was a virgin until she was 28, plus she didn't finish her cake. But she eventually sort of kind of maybe forgave her brother. She had to. No one else in the family could stand her. Besides, he made a lot of money.

INT. SOUTH BEND - LUCIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucia gets out of a car in front of her house. There's a SOLD sticker pasted on the "FOR SALE" sign. Tom and Bill are with her, smiling.

EXT. GRAND CANYON - CANYON TRAIL - DAY

A blonde woman on a burro rounds a corner. There's a burro there, riderless, looking over the canyon rim. The blonde woman calls a name, then kicks the burro.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Her dad died in the Grand Canyon. Something about a burro. His secretary lived. Her mother died a year later. In a post office. She was standing right next to the supervisor. She was mailing a book to Tom.

INT. MALL BOOKSTORE - DAY

A 58-year-old woman looks at a book, considering it favorably. We see the title: "GOD MADE ME STRAIGHT: An Ex-Gay and Jesus Christ."

INT. RAMADA INN - LUCIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lucia is watching the TV.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Marcia lives in Saudi Arabia with her husband, who works for Texaco. She has cysts so no kids. And Tricia lives in Nashville. She's in retail. She has three boys who are big in Scouting.

TV SCREEN - "THE SHOPPING NETWORK"

It's "Tricia's Trinket Time". Tricia is selling small wooden boxes for holding keys. She looks about how you'd expect.

DEDEE (V.O.)
When Tom got sick, she visited once, then she got him on several prayer lists, whatever they are, which must've worked real well because he died like in a month.
(MORE)

DEDEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
At Christmas she sends Lucia one of whatever item she couldn't sell to her audience. Lucia checks in during the year and makes bets on what it might be. It'll either be this or the quilted stand-up vacuum cleaner cover.

In the hotel room, Lucia zaps Tricia with the remote. She starts getting ready for bed. She empties her makeup case onto the counter. She brushes her teeth without looking at herself in the mirror, which isn't easy.

DEDEE (V.O.)
None of this makes me like her more, but I thought you should know. Just to be fair. Meanwhile, I had my own problems.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD COURTYARD APARTMENTS - DAY

Pretty run-down, Wilcox-y.

DEDEE'S VOICE
(into a phone)
No. I do, too. It's just... How are you? Did that clear up? Uh-huh. What'd they give you for it? Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Antibiotic. Anything that ends in I-N is. Like penicillin. I don't know why. What do you mean?

INT. HOLLYWOOD APARTMENT - NIGHT

The inside matches the outside. Dedee's on the phone in the bedroom. She looks very pregnant.

DEDEE
Okay, okay. I got a t-shirt on and bikini pants. I was going to go swimming. What are you talking about? You're sick. Okay. Just a second.

She waits a moment, sighs, then:

DEDEE
Okay, I took it off. Pretty tan, yeah. Uh-huh -- I've got shoes on. High heels. You know my black ones I wore to the Holiday Inn?

O.S. the FRONT DOOR OPENS.

DEDEE
(into phone)
Shit, I gotta go. Tomorrow? So what if it's Sunday? Whatever. Bye.

She hangs up, sighs.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dedee goes into the living room. Matt is standing there blankly, looking at some flyers that were taped to his door. He doesn't look so hot. He's stooped. He needs a haircut. He's got a goatee. His skin is glistening unhealthily, from sweat and chicken fat. He wears a Boston Market uniform. He's got several cuts on his hands.

DEDEE
Hey.

MATT
I got coupons here. It's the Rubbermaid Blowout at K-Mart. Do we need any of this? Dish rack?

DEDEE
Maybe. Whatever. Where's the food?
(off his blank look)
My side dishes. You were gonna bring home my choice of sides.

MATT
Shit, honey, I forgot. I'll go back.

DEDEE
How can you forget? Do you even think about me when you're there?

Matt approaches her. Takes her in his arms. It looks like a decision, not an impulse.

MATT
Course I think of you.

He tries to kiss her.

DEDEE
You smell like chicken parts.

He keeps kissing her till she pushes him away.

DEDEE
Is that all you think about? Sex?

MATT
I don't know.

DEDEE
Because I'm sick of lying on my stomach.

She goes into the bedroom and slams the door. Opens it immediately to yell out:

DEDEE
Mashed potatoes, creamed spinach, and corn. 'Kay?

Matt nods, sits down, keeps studying the K-Mart flyer.

EXT. SUNSET AND LA BREA - SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

A legacy of the eighties: a large strip center with inadequate parking, and a SuperCuts, a Boston Market, a Subway, a copy shop. WE FIND Bill and Lucia standing by their rental car, surveying the area, until --

LUCIA
There.

SEVERAL PAY PHONES

tucked in an alcove by the Subway.

BILL
Okay. You take this half, I'll take that.

MONTAGE

Lucia and Bill with snapshots separately inquiring of cashiers, store managers, clerks: Have you seen this guy? The answer is always some version of "No."

INT. BOSTON MARKET - DAY

Lucia and Bill carry trays to their seats.

LUCIA
Maybe they're bad pictures. Maybe he's grown a beard or colored his hair or something...

BILL
Yeah.

LUCIA
Or changed his name. Or he could've been stopping off here on his way home.
(standing up)
Excuse me. Bathroom.

INT. BOSTON MARKET - RESTROOM AREA - DAY

The women's door is locked. Lucia waits in this anteroom. There's a door to the kitchen, a broken payphone, and a bulletin board. We SEE it before Lucia: a picture of Matt as "Employee of the Month". She almost misses it; she has her ear to the door, listening for signs of life inside the bathroom. The door opens suddenly, she half-stumbles into room, the emerging FEMALE CUSTOMER gives her a look. As Lucia enters the bathroom, turns to close the door, she sees it. It's not what she wanted.

BACK AT THE TABLE

Lucia returns.

BILL
I was getting worried.
(as he looks at her)
What?

LUCIA
Let's just go home and let the police handle this.

BILL
Lucia --

She takes the folded-up picture out of her purse, shows it to him.

LUCIA
He works tonight.

EXT. STRIP CENTER - DAY (M.O.S.)

Just before sunset. Lucia sits on the hood of their car. Bill stands. The back door of the restaurant opens, and Matt emerges carrying two bags of trash. He heads for the dumpster. Bill calls his name. Matt turns, shocked. He freezes. Bill goes toward him. Lucia watches, sourly, as they talk, at first animatedly, then quietly. Matt looks over to Lucia. She forces a smile. Matt and Bill continue talking.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Poor Bill. He shouldn't have come. Matt denied everything with that Jason guy, and Bill believed him. It must be inherited from our father, you know? Romantic. It's just, when it's a man being romantic about a woman like Miss Selectric, it's not as revolting.

INT. BILL'S CAR - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Lucia's driving; Bill's riding shotgun. After a long moment:

LUCIA
He looks like shit. That beard. And his posture...

BILL
He hurt his back lifting.

LUCIA
Looks like a poster of Early Man. I'm going to that dinner tomorrow. I got a few things to say to her. To him, too.

BILL
Hey, Lucia. I know what I'm doing.

LUCIA
You think so? You're like a fucking lobster in a pot. All thrilled 'cause the water's getting toasty.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The next night. First we see Dedee, trying to be composed.

DEDEE
Let me do the talking when we get to the money, okay?

Now we see Matt. He's shaved off his goatee.

MATT
Whatever.

INT. HOLIDAY INN, HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

The one that revolves, nearly empty. Lucia and Bill are already sitting at a table. They watch as Dedee and Matt make their way to them. Lucia notices how big Dedee is. Dedee's not surprised to see Lucia; just angry.

LUCIA
Jesus.

They get to the table. Bill stands. Lucia, her eyes on Dedee's belly, does a slow burn.

BILL
Hey.

DEDEE
(to Bill)
Hi.
(to Lucia)
Couldn't stay away, huh?

Matt pulls out a chair for her. She sits down, looks around.

DEDEE
I thought you might like it here. It revolves.

BILL
(to Matt)
You shaved it off.

DEDEE
(quickly, lying:)
I didn't like it.
(an attempt at a smile)
So. Are you enjoying your stay here?

BILL
I don't know if that's the word.

LUCIA
Can I ask you something, Dedee? When did you meet Matt? Refresh my memory.

A waiter has arrived.

MATT
Does anybody want a drink?

DEDEE
Long Island Iced Tea.

BILL
Is that a good idea? For the baby?

DEDEE
This baby owes its life to Long Island Iced Tea, if you know what I mean.
(to the waiter)
Lots of ice.

LUCIA
Diet Coke.

BILL
Diet Coke.

MATT
Diet Coke. I mean, real Coke.

DEDEE
(to the Waiter)
Do you have Bananas Foster on your dessert menu?

WAITER
No.

DEDEE
Someone told me you had Bananas Foster.

WAITER
I'm sorry.

He leaves. Dedee's pouting.

DEDEE
It's like impossible to get Bananas Foster.

MATT
Maybe they'll make it for you. If you describe it.

DEDEE
What about the sauce? You think they have the sauce just sitting around back there for Bananas Foster but they don't have Bananas Foster on the menu?

BILL
(his schoolteacher voice)
I appreciate you guys both agreeing to meet with me --

DEDEE
With you, not her.

BILL
-- because there's a lot to talk about. A lot of reasons why you're coming back with us to Indiana.

DEDEE
I'm not going back.

BILL
You're 16. You're going to have a baby. Matt, you can't support her on what you make at that job.

DEDEE
That's for sure. Matt doesn't want to get legal, but you guys were kind of man and wife, so he should get half of what you have.

LUCIA
Are you serious?

BILL
That's not going to happen, Dedee. And if that's what you're thinking --

LUCIA
What about the $10,000 he stole?

DEDEE
He was entitled!

MATT
I'm really sorry about that, Bill --

BILL
You fucked up there. You're going to have to pay that back --

DEDEE
Hey, this isn't about us giving you money.

LUCIA
I'll tell you what it's about, Dedee. It's about timing. It's about trimesters. Do you know what I'm talking about?

DEDEE
(she does)
Like I'm going back to school? Come on, Matt --

LUCIA
You made a mistake coming here. You should have stayed home and sent Matt to do your dirty work. See, I've got eyes in my head, and I can tell you're five months pregnant, easy. Five-and-a-half, even. So that can't be Matt's baby.

A silence from everyone. Finally:

DEDEE
You're crazy. She's crazy. Let's go.

MATT
You're in your third month, right?

LUCIA
She was pregnant when she met you.

DEDEE
Hey, I put on weight, big deal. What the hell do you know about it anyway? Like you've ever been pregnant!

MATT
She eats all the time.

LUCIA
It's not your baby, Matt. It's some other schmuck's with an eighth-grade education and a trunkful of Klan pamphlets. You don't owe her or that baby anything.

DEDEE
What the hell is your problem, lady --

BILL
Dedee? Is it Matt's?

Dedee's trapped. She's about to speak when --

MATT
Hey, it's her baby, isn't it? Whoever the father is. And I don't know how you figure I don't owe my wife's baby anything.

Another silence, equal to the first.

BILL
Your wife?

MATT
We got married in Vegas.

DEDEE
(smiling)
I can't wear the ring because I'm all swelled up, but it's nice. Color, clarity, carat. The three C's of diamond buying.

BILL
But... who's the father? He's got rights and responsibilities...

DEDEE
My stepfather, if you want to know. And he's got the responsibility to rot in his grave which I hope he's living up to.
(to Lucia)
That make you feel better?

LUCIA
I don't believe you. You'd say anything. Maybe you should try saying it to the police --

Dedee reaches into her bag. She brings out the urn that used to be on Bill's mantel. Everyone, even Matt, is stunned.

LUCIA
Where did you get that?

Dedee opens it, turns it over onto the tablecloth. It's empty.

DEDEE
If you want his ashes, you stop following me. You cover my expenses and leave me alone. Matt?

She gets up and leaves. Matt looks quickly to Bill.

MATT
Shit, I didn't know.

He gets up quickly and follows. Lucia and Bill look at the empty urn.

LUCIA
Tom...

BILL
I'm going to kill her.

AT THE ELEVATOR

Dedee and Matt are getting in when Bill pulls her back. Lucia is right behind him. The Maitre d' watches...

BILL
I want them back tonight.

MATT
Hey, don't grab her.

LUCIA
Shut up, Matt. I want my brother's ashes, you little bitch!

Dedee pulls herself free.

DEDEE
Hey! I didn't want to take them. I did it for insurance. In case you filed charges or he did something stupid, like call you. Don't worry, they're zip-locked.

MATT
Dedee --

DEDEE
Babies cost money, Matt, and I've got too many principles to go on welfare. You follow me or call the cops and I flush, you know what I mean? Matt?

Lucia reaches out, tries to grab her.

LUCIA
You are one heartless little --

DEDEE
Yeah, no heart, Lucia, that's me. What body part are <u>you</u> missing?

The elevator doors close and they go down. Lucia is near tears. Bill is deeply, coldly angry. We've never seen him like this. He looks up at the elevator.

BILL
Shit.

INT. HOLIDAY INN STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Bill and Lucia are running down the stairs.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN, HIGHLAND - NIGHT

Dedee and Matt's car pulls out of the hotel parking lot onto Highland. Bill and Lucia run to their rental and follow them.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Bill and Lucia follow Dedee and Matt. These are very unglamorous Hollywood streets.

DEDEE (V.O.)
They're just ashes, you know what I'm saying? Who knows if they're really his anyway? You really think they keep them separate? Please. And don't get all righteous and try to impress yourself by hating me. Go ahead if you want to but look at them. They've never had more fun in their lives. These are teachers, remember. It's this or clapping erasers in South Bend.

EXT. WILCOX AVENUE - NIGHT

Bill's car pulls over.

INT. BILL'S CAR - (STATIONARY) - NIGHT

Bill and Lucia watching:

THEIR POV - DEDEE AND MATT

getting out of their parked car, crossing the street into a rundown courtyard apartment.

BACK TO BILL AND LUCIA

LUCIA
Now what?

BILL
Do you want the ashes back?

LUCIA
I wanted you to divvy them up, remember? Just in case something like this happened.

BILL
Yeah, I don't know why I didn't see this coming.

LUCIA
You don't have to be sarcastic.

BILL
I say we wait. He'll go to work in the morning, she'll go out looking for Bananas Foster, whatever the fuck they are, and we break in and find them.

LUCIA
Great. Our first felony.

She looks over at Bill, who is watching the apartment. He looks hurt. Is it Tom? Is it Matt? She has a moment of compassion.

LUCIA
He didn't know she took them. Anyway, we've got the urn.
(shows it to him)
There's some stuck to the bottom.
(Bill's not moving)
Let's go back to the motel and you can talk to him at work tomorrow.

BILL
You think I'm a total idiot? You're right, I should have stayed in South Bend. But I'm not going anywhere now without Tom's ashes.

Lucia doesn't look as pleased as she should. She settles down against the side of the car, tries to get to sleep.

EXT. WILCOX AVENUE - DAY

Morning. Bill's sitting on the curb when Lucia drives up, parks. He gets in the car.

INT. BILL'S CAR - (STATIONARY) - DAY

Lucia has a couple bags of McDonald's. Bill takes a coffee.

LUCIA
Nothing?

BILL
Couple neighbors left. There's eight apartments. They're in the last one on the left.

LUCIA
We could call the restaurant, see when he's scheduled?

BILL
Shit.

BILL'S POV - MATT

leaves the apartment building, crosses the street to the car. Starts it, pulls out.

BACK TO SCENE

BILL
He doesn't have his uniform.

LUCIA
Unless it's in the car. Should we follow him?

BILL
He doesn't have the ashes. She wouldn't trust him with them.

LATER

Lucia crushes up the final empty bag of McDonald's.

LUCIA
She could stay in there all day.

BILL
(a sudden decision)
I'm gonna talk to her. She's my sister.

LUCIA
I'm coming too --

They both get out of the car and then freeze as they see

A TEENAGER

pull up in a real beater with Louisiana plates. We recognize him as Randy, Dedee's duped Christian boyfriend from Crevecoeur. CAMERA TURNS to find Dedee in the courtyard of her apartment. Randy approaches her. They kiss. She leads him back into the complex.

BACK TO BILL AND LUCIA

They are shocked. Crouching behind their car:

LUCIA
My God. She's the Human Tabloid.

But Bill's gone -- crossing the street towards the apartment.

LUCIA
What are you doing? Bill!

EXT. SIDE OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Bill is quietly picking his way down the side of the apartment building. A line of bamboo hides him from the neighbors. We HEAR a lot of daytime TV coming through the windows he passes. Lucia's right behind him.

LUCIA
(whispering)
What are we doing?

He turns to her, waves her to stay put -- but she doesn't.

LUCIA
Come on, let's go back to the car.

BILL
Maybe he's here to get the ashes. Maybe she's giving them to him to hold. Keep a lookout for Matt.

They reach the last window. The RADIO is ON here, LOUD.

BILL
I can't hear a thing.

LUCIA
Good. Let's go.

BILL
Just a second.

He raises his head, peers inside.

BILL'S POV - DEDEE AND MATT'S BEDROOM

Randy's on his back, his pants down around his ankles. Dedee's on top of him, moving up and down.

BACK TO BILL

as he ducks down.

LUCIA
What?

BILL
I think we found the father. Of the next one, anyway.

Lucia peeks.

LUCIA'S POV

Behind the rising-and-falling Dedee, the TV, on MUTE, shows the Home Shopping Network -- and Lucia's muted sister.

BACK TO LUCIA

She tears herself away, sinks down next to Bill.

LUCIA
That can't be good for the baby.

BILL
It'll be over soon. If she gives him the ashes, it'll be then.

Behind them, in the apartment, we HEAR Dedee CLIMAXING. Then Randy.

LUCIA
Okay.

They look up -- but Dedee and Randy are going at it again.

LATER

Lucia has fallen asleep on Bill's shoulder. Suddenly the RADIO goes off, and the change in sound wakes her. She looks at Bill. He holds up six fingers. Lucia's incredulous, then disgusted. Now they HEAR A TOILET FLUSHING, then TALKING:

DEDEE (O.S.)
It's not gonna do any good. I've looked everywhere.

RANDY (O.S.)
You're sure he didn't lose it like he said?

DEDEE (O.S.)
I was watching him the whole time he was in the casino. Besides, he's too wimpy to gamble.

She goes to the window and tries to open it wider. It's stuck. The screen falls off and lands on Lucia and Bill.

DEDEE
Fucking window. God, I'm sick of this city. Robin Leach can bite me.

As she stands above them, unaware of them below her, she takes a final puff of her cigarette and tosses it out the

window. She moves away from the window. Bill and Lucia breathe again.

DEDEE (O.S.)
I'm hungry. Let's go.

WE HEAR a DOOR OPENING.

RANDY (O.S.)
What's that?

DEDEE (O.S.)
Shit.

MATT (O.S.)
Honey? I told you to keep the door locked.

Bill and Lucia see a leg suddenly thrust itself out the window -- and then stop suddenly.

MATT (O.S.)
Hey! What the fuck --

Randy is at the window, trying to get it open. He gives up, turns around. As he does we go:

INT. DEDEE AND MATT'S BEDROOM, HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Matt is standing at the door, seeing Randy in his underwear and Dedee wrapped in a towel.

DEDEE
You're supposed to be at work till three.

MATT
I quit. We're going back home. Who is he?

Stupidly, Randy tries affability.

RANDY
Hey, Randy Cates, man. How ya doing?

MATT
Fuck you.

Randy starts dressing as Dedee handles Matt.

DEDEE
Matt, he's a friend from home. He wanted to use the shower.
(realizing her hair's wet)
And I was in the shower so he can go in now.
(to Randy)
Why don't you get in the shower now?

MATT
Why don't you get the fuck out of here?

RANDY
Hey, man. Be cool. I come in fellowship.

MATT
I said get out of here!
(to Dedee)
You think I'm stupid?

DEDEE
What do you mean, we're going home?

MATT
This isn't how it's gonna be. You don't go around stealing people's ashes, you know. It was bad enough taking the money --

DEDEE
-- You took the money --

MATT
Well, I'm giving it back.
(he realizes he's made a mistake)
I mean, what's left of it.

DEDEE
(to Randy)
See? He lied to me.
(to Matt)
You didn't lose it in Vegas. Where is it?

MATT
You're not getting it. It's for the baby. I meant what I said. I don't care who the father is, I'm going to raise it, and so are you.

DEDEE
That's my money!

RANDY
What do you mean, it's not your kid? It's not his kid?

DEDEE
Whose do you think it is, Randy? Mr. Who-Needs-a-Rubber-I'll-Pull-Out-In-Time?

MATT
You said it was your stepfather's --

DEDEE
Come on, Randy!

Matt looks from her to Randy.

MATT
Is this the guy with one ball?

RANDY
Hey! Dedee!

DEDEE
We're out of here, Matt. It's his baby and we're going to start fresh, right, Randy? It's God's will.

Randy rises to the challenge.

RANDY
Yeah, I guess so. I wish his will had been for me to wear a rubber, but...
(he shakes himself together, turns to Matt)
...that's life, so... we need the money. See what I mean? For the baby.

MATT
No way.

DEDEE
Come on, Matt. Come on.

She sidles up to him; suggestively:

DEDEE
It's not gonna work out between us. You're gay. I don't mind so much, but I want my kid to have a real father.

MATT
I told you I was gay!

RANDY
This guy's a homo?

MATT
Could you just leave us alone now?

RANDY
What about AIDS?

DEDEE
That's where the ashes come in, but don't worry about it.

RANDY
You haven't been doing it with him, have you? He's probably getting it all over the baby!

He turns to Matt, starts pushing him.

RANDY
That's an innocent child in there, you son-of-a-bitch.

DEDEE
Hey. Randy! Be Christ-like!

MATT
Don't do that, man.

RANDY
Fucking faggot!

Matt hauls off and punches Randy. It's a good punch; Randy hits the wall. But it's made him furious. He lunges at Matt. They punch each other, rolling around the floor.

DEDEE
Hey! Hey!

Suddenly there's a gunshot. Dedee's holding the gun. The bullet buries itself in the mattress. Matt and Randy stop fighting.

OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT

Lucia and Bill hear the shot. Bill starts to get up but Lucia restrains him.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

Matt and Randy, both bloodied from their fight, eyes round, wait for instructions. Dedee doesn't lower the gun.

DEDEE
Where's the money?

He looks up.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW (SECONDS LATER)

The money is taped to the ceiling-side of a blade in the ceiling fan. His hand appears in the frame, removes it.

BACK TO SCENE

Matt hands the money to Dedee.

MATT
You're going to need money for the baby.

RANDY
We'll deal. Come on, Dedee.

MATT
Hey! The ashes!

DEDEE
You follow me, they feed the bay, you know what I mean? I'll mail them to you if you're cool.

He sinks down on the bed.

MATT
When?

Dedee and Randy leave.

RANDY (O.S.)
What's all this shit about ashes?

EXT. SIDE OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Lucia's at the front corner of the building, hiding behind a yucca, watching them hurry to Randy's car. She's aware of the gun, but she manages to get a few letters off the license plate.

LUCIA
T-C-8 something something something. Louisiana. T-C-8 --

She's expecting to see Bill right behind her. He's not. She looks back down the side of the apartment building.

LUCIA'S POV - BILL

shoving Matt against the wall, not too roughly. Matt is refusing to fight back. Finally, Bill stops shoving him. Frustrated, he grabs hold of the fence, rattles it. Matt tries to calm him.

BACK TO LUCIA

wary.

EXT. RAMADA INN - BILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lucia's on the phone. Bill's at the window, staring out. His suitcase is almost packed.

LUCIA
Well, I think you're a fool but it's none of my business --

The door to the bathroom opens and Matt comes out of the shower.

MATT
Wow, that's a really good shower.

LUCIA
Yeah. Sit down, Matt.

MATT
You see the sewing kit they give you?

BILL
Matt... I know you're sorry for what's happened.

MATT
You mean for stealing the money?

LUCIA
And my brother's ashes, and the trouble your old boyfriend got Bill into at school --

MATT
He's not my boyfriend -- I can't believe he said that --

BILL
Let's not go into any post-mortems, okay? Let's just go back home, see if we can straighten Jason out, and take it from there.

LUCIA
I'm sure Jason'll put you up, boyfriend or not.

MATT
What about the ashes?

BILL
They're not Tom, okay? I'd rather they weren't bouncing around in some knapsack right now --

LUCIA
You wish. She's probably trying to smoke them.

BILL
(quietly, as privately as he can to Matt)
What I'm saying is, I don't want a lot of bad feeling and bullshit. Let's just go on with our own separate lives and try to forget how it ended, okay?

MATT
Wow. I'm really surprised.

Lucia's in high spirits: they're going home. Breezily:

LUCIA
This is how we do things on the planet Maturia. We have much to teach you here.

BILL
(eyes on Matt; something's coming)
Lucia --

MATT
Really surprised. I expected better from you. Well, maybe not from Lucia, but you, Bill. Come on. She's your sister --

LUCIA
What?

MATT
-- pregnant, probably abused, with all sorts of repressed memories that haven't even occurred to her yet, she comes to you for help and instead you just let her go away with this violent guy who pulled a gun on me --

BILL
Now wait a minute --

MATT
She's in danger! You promised her mother you'd look after her, and now this guy who's pissed off at the world because of a physical abnormality which he will probably take out on Dedee...

LUCIA
I think she's pretty used to him taking out his physical abnormality. Taking it out and waving it around.

She looks at Bill, inviting him to laugh -- but Matt's arguments are registering with him. Her smile fades.

BILL
I know she's technically a minor, but...

MATT
Come on Bill. She's a kid. She's got no one to turn to, not her mother, her father is dead, her stepfather is dead, I lied to her about the money, and even her blood brother who she came to for help by bus, even he's washing his hands of her...

BILL
I should let her mother know?

Suddenly, Lucia explodes. She hurls herself at Matt --

LUCIA
I'm going to fucking kill you!

Bill grabs her, pulls her off Matt.

MATT
You're frustrated, Lucia, I understand that, I even share your feelings --

LUCIA
Prove it! Help me kill yourself!

MATT
But I also feel some responsibility to Dedee.
(the truth now)
And that baby.

Bill holds Lucia as Matt goes to the phone.

BILL
What are you doing?

MATT
(into phone)
Hi, yeah. I think it's a business. The police. Missing persons.

LUCIA
Let go of me!

Bill pushes her aside onto the bed. He takes the phone, slams it down.

BILL
Enough! Matt, sit down. Don't touch that phone! Lucia, take five. Go on. Get out. Go. I'll handle this.

LUCIA
(in an undertone)
Bill, come on. I don't think he's as dumb as we think.

BILL
As you think, Lucia.

LUCIA
God damn it! God damn both of you! I hope Tom Cruise is as straight as they come! I never thought he wasn't!

She slams out.

INT. RAMADA INN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucia exits the room. Down the hall, the stairway exit door closes quickly. Someone's been listening... Lucia moves towards the other end of the hallway where there's an elevator.

INT. RAMADA INN - GROUND FLOOR - NIGHT

Lucia exits the elevator, goes toward the stairway door, opens it -- and sees Carl standing there, surprised, guilty.

CARL
Hey. Lucia.

Lucia looks at him, dumbfounded, then slams the door on him and heads outside.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Lucia walks, Carl chases after her. She raises her hand as if to flag a cab.

CARL
Lucia! Lucia! It's L.A. They don't have cabs.

LUCIA
Leave me alone!
(to a passing car)
Can you take me to the airport!

Carl reaches her, takes her arm.

CARL
Hey.

LUCIA
You want to arrest somebody? They're upstairs in 315. I'll testify. I'll be on the fucking jury.

CARL
I don't have any jurisdiction here. I'm here as a friend. Known him, what, twenty years. Longer than you.

LUCIA
Loyal to a fault, that's you.

CARL
Hey, Lucia. He's in trouble. The little shit who filed charges isn't withdrawing them. The school board is all politics -- he might really lose his job. All he needs is this problem with the girl spinning out of control. I'm here to keep an eye on him. I get vacations like everybody else.

LUCIA
Really? Well, while you've been keeping an eye on him, there's been a gunfight, some grand larceny, a little extortion, and the transportation of a minor across state lines. When does the busting-down-the-door-and-saving-us-from-ourselves part come in? Right before we hijack Air Force One?

CARL
When was all this? Today? I was... visiting a friend.

LUCIA
Oh, yeah, she moved out here. What's her name? Terry? Cherry?

CARL
Sherry. What's your beef with me?

LUCIA
Nothing. Your wife was dying and you screwed her nurse. No big deal.

CARL
I was lonely.

LUCIA
That's all you've got to say for yourself?

CARL
If Nancy didn't mind, why should you?

LUCIA
Nancy knew?

CARL
What gunfight?

LUCIA
Like I'm talking to you? Like I would stoop that low?

CARL
Fine. You take the moral high ground. I'll be down here, looking up your dress. Coffee?

He holds the door of Starbuck's open for her.

LUCIA
In your dreams.

INT. STARBUCK'S - NIGHT

Lucia's just finished telling Carl everything that's happened.

LUCIA
So unless Bill talked him out of it, Matt's phoning in a missing person's report. And Matt's not the pushover I thought he was.

CARL
Then that's the end of Bill.

LUCIA
He's got a death wish. It's so selfish. I've got one too, but I direct it towards others.
(an idea occurs to her)
If only there was some way to reassure Matt the police were onto it.

CARL
Oh, they'll take the call seriously, believe me.

LUCIA
I mean unofficially. Like someone running interference with the authorities. You know, "reaching out". Like on "NYPD Blue". The fat guy's always reaching out, keeping things in the family and out of the papers. You could do that.

CARL
Lucia --

LUCIA
Hey, Carl, come on. Take an inventory here. Don't you think you could use a little character redemption?

INT. BILL'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY (M.O.S.)

Carl, Lucia, Matt, Bill. Carl's on the phone long-distance. Lucia is yelling at Matt, who's listening to Carl. Bill is drinking a Coke, watching Matt.

DEDEE (V.O.)
You gotta hand it to her. She gets her way. Always. And it's not sex appeal. Look at her. She looks like a cafeteria lady. If they made a Lucia doll it'd come with a hair net, plastic gloves, and her own working steam tray. She's beyond sex. Like amoebas. Anyway, this cop calls back home, runs Randy's plate, gets an unofficial APB put out for us, if you can believe that.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Bill and Matt are asleep on opposite sides of the room. Lucia's dozing; Carl's watching her. The phone rings and he answers it.

DEDEE (V.O.)
And sure enough, one of them sees our car.

EXT. PALM SPRINGS - DAY

Dawn. A policeman on the radio, looking off-screen. He listens, pulls out.

DEDEE (V.O.)
This Carl guy says it was a mistake, removes the APB, and that's how it's done, you know? Like, who's the criminals here? Meanwhile, I'm getting sick of Randy... I'm starting to think he's missing more than a ball, you know what I mean?

CAMERA SWIVELS to show us what the cop was looking at: a cheap Palm Springs motel with Randy's car in front.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALM SPRINGS - MOTEL - DAY

Later. Randy's car is in front; in the back a motorcycle, a bucket of suds, a hose.

INT. PALM SPRINGS MOTEL - DAY

A cheap motel in Palm Springs. Dedee's on the phone. The magic fingers on the bed are on; the mattress is vibrating.

DEDEE
(into phone)
No, I'm fine. You know I do. Well keep your pants on, I'll be there -- oops, gotta go.

The door opens and Randy comes in, pissed.

RANDY
There's a big old rust spot on the -- were you on the phone?

DEDEE
(lying)
My mom. Says hi.

The Magic Fingers stop and Dedee slaps the metal box.

DEDEE
Did you talk to them about this piece of shit?

RANDY
He said unplug it. I told you no phone calls.

DEDEE
You serious? You told me?

RANDY
Hey, come on. In a Christian family, the man is the guy, you know? It can't be like voting. I'm the guy, you're the wife and the mother and so on.

DEDEE
Yeah? This whole religion starts because this girl gets knocked up by someone who isn't her fiancé and she tells him, Honey, I'm sorry, I think it was the Holy Ghost, which you're hearing about for the first time, either that or a bird, and the guy says, oh, okay, honey, if you say so, when's the wedding? -- and the moral of this story is that the man rules the roost?

RANDY
Phone calls in motels are rip-offs. We can't afford it.

DEDEE
We can't afford it because you spent $4,000 on that fucking bike yesterday.

RANDY
Can you watch your language please?

DEDEE
No, you watch my language, I'll watch my money. I want the rest of it right now. You can't handle it.

RANDY
It's the husband's job to decide --

DEDEE
Hey, Bible Boy, you're not my fucking husband. Now give me the fucking money.

RANDY
This is what happens when you talk to your mom. She gets you worked up.

DEDEE
She wants me to come home.

RANDY
We're not going back there.

DEDEE
There'll be a ticket at the airport by five.

Dedee goes into the bathroom. Randy is left alone in the bedroom. He's panicky. He goes to the door, bangs on it.

RANDY
Dedee, you can't go home! You need to stay here with me! I've prayed on this!

DEDEE (O.S.)
Pray on this, Parable Head!

Randy, desperate, goes to the night stand, takes out Dedee's gun. He brings it back to the door.

RANDY
I've got your gun here!

A pause, then Dedee opens the door. She's unimpressed.

DEDEE
Oh for God's sake. What are you going do? Shoot me? Shoot yourself?

She takes it from him and throws it on the bed, which starts vibrating.

RANDY
Goddammit, Dedee, you don't treat me fair, you know? It's a lot of driving from Crevecoeur to here. You said come and I came, no stopovers or anything. And all I ask is that you stand by your man, you know, like I'm standing by you. Lot of guys woulda said, hey, she took up with homosexuals. She's turned her back on righteousness.

DEDEE
But blowing you in the back seat of your car every day after band was a stairway to heaven, right?

Dedee drags her suitcase on the bed, starts packing, taking everything that isn't nailed down in the room. All the while she looks out the window.

RANDY
You waiting for somebody?

DEDEE
The guy from the bike shop. He's coming to take it back. The bike.

RANDY
(dumbfounded)
No, he's not.

She waves the pink slip and the sales contract at him.

DEDEE
That was my money, not yours. When I told the guy you bought it with stolen money, he decided he ought to take it back.

WE FOLLOW HER as she starts emptying the dresser drawers.

DEDEE
I'll leave you enough for gas to get wherever you're going, but I need the rest of it for when I get back to Louisiana. I don't intend to --

We're CLOSE ON HER when her face is slammed into one of the drawers, dazing her. WIDEN to show that Randy is standing over her, eyes unfocused, breathing hard.

RANDY
Why are you acting this way?

Dedee is on the floor, shaken. She shakes her head; tears are forming.

DEDEE
I think you hurt the baby.

Randy, back to his senses, kneels down to comfort her -- and she kicks him in the groin. He reels back, clutching himself, swears. She goes for the door, but he grabs her, throws her backwards on the bed. We can't see much of what's going on. We HEAR SOMEONE getting punched, and then we hear a GUNSHOT, muffled by the blankets. Then total silence, aside from the SOUND OF THE MAGIC FINGERS. Now the CAMERA moves slowly over to the bed. Both bodies are vibrating slightly -- but it looks like Randy's arm is moving while Dedee's legs are not. Then we realize Dedee, underneath Randy, has been moving his lifeless arm to get it off her. She sits up in bed. The back of his head is bloody.

DEDEE (V.O.)
What'd you think, I'd be the dead one? I'm the fucking narrator, guys. Keep up.

Dedee reaches over to Randy, feels for a pulse. He's dead. Definitely. She's horrified.

DEDEE (V.O.)
It'd be a lot easier for all of us right now if Randy was someone we hated, but he was nice, mostly. Even I liked him. So in order to get you to swallow it, and not totally hate me, I'm gonna show you something that happens like in five hours.

INT. PALM SPRINGS CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The M.E. speaks to the police officer. Randy's body is visible behind them.

M.E.
He had a very enlarged heart. He would have lived, I don't know. Not more than six months. Least this way he died quick. Never knew what hit him.

POLICE OFFICER
Yeah. Looks peaceful. Probably an orphan. But it's still murder.

M.E.
Just not as unlikable.

POLICE OFFICER
(looking at the body)
What is that, only one ball?

INT. PALM SPRINGS MOTEL - DAY

Right where we left off: Dedee is horrified, panicky. The sheets are covered with blood. She stands up -- and faints, falls back on the vibrating bed. It continues for a few seconds, then stops with a shudder.

EXT. PALM SPRINGS MOTEL - DAY

Later. Two cars drive up. One of them is Bill's rental; he and Matt are in it. The other is Carl's; he's driving, Lucia's the sour passenger. Bill parks his car; gets out, comes back to Lucia and Carl while Matt heads into the motel office. Carl winds down his window to talk.

BILL
That's the car. They're here.

LUCIA
(opening her door)
Let's go.

BILL
I think just Matt and I ought to talk to them. She doesn't like you.

LUCIA
A lot of people don't like me, doesn't mean I can't talk to them. Isn't that right, Carl?

CARL
That a lot of people don't like you?

LUCIA
He has a gun. He's a Southerner with a gun.

BILL
(seeing Matt come out of the office)
Don't come up unless we call you. Carl?

CARL
I'm just here as a friend. Your call.

Lucia slumps back into her seat, glowers at Carl. Bill and Matt confer, then head up the outside staircase.

LUCIA
On the way back to L.A., I'm with them.

CARL
I thought they deserved some privacy.

LUCIA
They deserve each other, that's what they deserve.

CARL
That's what I'm saying.

Lucia glares at him.

EXT. MOTEL - SECOND STORY BREEZEWAY - DAY

Matt and Bill go towards the door.

BILL
You okay?

MATT
We're just gonna get the ashes. I'm fine.

He knocks on the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The SOUND OF KNOCKING wakes up Dedee -- who suddenly realizes that the body she is sleeping next to is a corpse. She freaks, pushes the body to the floor, then freezes as she realizes that someone's at the door. She's not going to answer until:

MATT (O.S.)
Dedee! It's me, Matt! Open up.

DEDEE
(relieved)
My God...

She goes to the door, opens it, falls into Matt's arms. She's about to let him in when she sees Bill. She closes the door behind her.

DEDEE
It's Randy. He's sleeping. How'd you find us?

Matt has some difficulty extricating himself from her arms.

MATT
Listen, we're just here for the ashes. We know you don't want to come back to Indiana to have the baby --

DEDEE
I do. Indiana, Louisiana, anywhere. Let's go.

MATT
You mean now?

Bill is studying her, unsure about something.

BILL
You don't want to tell the guy? What's his name -- Randy?

DEDEE
He's a jerk. I can't stand him. Not that we fight or anything. He's just...
(an idea occurs to her)
...he's very depressed lately. It's getting to be a drag. He sleeps like a stone. That's a sign of depression.

BILL
What about Tom's ashes?

DEDEE
They're gone. What can I say, I needed the baggie --

BILL
Goddammit, Dedee.

A CAR HORN beeps from below.

DEDEE
Who's that?

MATT
Lucia and Carl.

DEDEE
Who's Carl?

MATT
This friend of ours. Sheriff from back home. That's how we found you.

DEDEE
(not liking this)
Oh.

BILL
I don't believe you don't have the ashes. I want to search your room.

DEDEE
God, Bill. I'm your own sister and you don't like me. Or trust me.
(as if giving in)
Okay. Matt can search. You wait out here.

BILL
I don't want him in there alone with Randy --

DEDEE
That was a lie. Randy's out. I had a craving. Wait here. Matt?

MATT
It's true, Bill. You don't like her. I'll look hard, I swear.

Dedee smiles, lets herself and Matt in the room, closes Bill out.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

No sooner are they in the door than Dedee gives Matt a long hard kiss on the mouth. He breaks for air.

MATT
Jesus, Dedee...

DEDEE
(whispering)
I missed you so much.

MATT
I don't know, Dedee...

She keeps kissing him, then whispers in his ear:

DEDEE
Randy's dead.

MATT
What?

Dedee whispers, motions for him to be quiet.

DEDEE
Shhh. He's on the floor behind the bed.

Matt goes over, sees the body.

MATT
Jesus Christ.

Matt feels for a pulse, starts mouth-to mouth.

DEDEE
For God's sake, Matt, he's dead. Stop it -- look at him. He's the color of a sink.

Matt sits back, looks at the body.

DEDEE
It was suicide. It's been coming for years. He shot himself.

MATT
In the back of the head?

DEDEE
He was always very limber, he had that going for him. You believe me, don't you?

MATT
Of course I do. It wasn't his baby, was it?

DEDEE
No.

MATT
And it's not mine.

DEDEE
Not really.

MATT
Then who's --

DEDEE
It's gonna have to be by process of elimination and we just don't have the time for that.

BILL (O.S.)
Hey, Matt? How's it going?

MATT
(off Dedee's prompting)
Fine! I'm being thorough.

DEDEE
Have him get me a Coke. I'm not feeling well.

MATT
Can you get Dedee a Coke? She's not feeling well.

BILL (O.S.)
Jesus. All right.

DEDEE
(calling out)
It's down by the office.

MATT
Stomach-ache?

DEDEE
That was just to get him out of the way. I got to ask you a question, Matt, and I want you to answer me really honestly. Do you still love me?

MATT
Well, sure, but...

DEDEE
And do you love my unborn child even though it's highly unlikely it has anything to do with you?

MATT
Unlikely doesn't mean impossible.

DEDEE
Well when it comes out, do you want the first thing it sees to be a jail cell?

MATT
Do they see right away?

DEDEE
Matt, the jail part's the thing here. I'll be in jail.

MATT
Oh. Why?

DEDEE
Because people aren't as understanding as you are... That's what these past few days have taught me.

Matt nods, trying to keep up.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Lucia and Carl watch as Bill approaches with a Coke.

LUCIA
What's going on?

BILL
They're up there looking for the ashes.
(off their looks)
Don't worry, I'm not that gullible.

LUCIA
They're having sex? How can you --

BILL
Shut up, Lucia, okay? "Please", if that makes a difference.

CARL
So what do you want to do?

BILL
This is it. It's over. I'm going home. With or without the ashes. With or without him. I'll tell him as soon as they... you know.
(he pops open the Coke)
I just hope they finish before Randy comes back.

THE CAN IS CRUSHED

and put on the hood of the car, joining two others. It's half an hour later. Carl and Lucia are outside the car now.

BILL
Well, ready or not, I'm going up...

Two men pull up in a car with "PALM SPRINGS HARLEY" decal'd on the side. Both men get out. One of them carries a helmet; the other goes into the office. Carl watches them.

LUCIA
He's inconsiderate and disrespectful till the end.

CARL
Wonder where the other kid went without his car?

The First Man goes up the stairs to Dedee's room. He knocks.

LUCIA
Look.

He calls down to the guy with the helmet.

FIRST MAN
No answer. Check the lot in back.

Suddenly all three are alarmed. Carl heads back behind the motel. Bill and Lucia head for the stairs.

AT DEDEE'S MOTEL DOOR

Bill runs up.

BILL
Matt! Matt!

LUCIA
(to First Man)
Are you looking for Dedee Macon?

BILL
Dedee!
(no answer from within)
Shit!

He stands back, kicks the door with his heel. After a couple tries, it bursts open. The First Man steps back; he doesn't want to get involved.

INT. DEDEE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Empty. Bill and Lucia can hear someone calling to them through the open bathroom window.

CARL (O.S.)
Bill! Is that you?

Bill heads into the bathroom -- but Lucia sees what he's missed: Randy's dead body. She freezes, then approaches the body slowly.

LUCIA
Bill?

She leans over, touches the body -- and it starts vibrating from the Magic Fingers. She SCREAMS.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Late afternoon. Police cars, ambulances, a coroner's wagon, reporters, the motorcycle salesmen, and all the guests who've been staying at this less-than-Best Western motel fill the parking lot. In the confusion, we find Carl, Lucia, and Bill standing together. Lucia is nervous; Bill's in a funk; Carl's in command.

CARL
They won't get far. They've got an APB out for the motorcycle.

LUCIA
All I know is we don't talk without a lawyer. Say nothing. People on "NYPD Blue" only get screwed if they talk.

CARL
What is it with you and that show?

BILL
That poor kid.

LUCIA
You still think she just needs love? She's a murderer.

BILL
We don't know that yet.

LUCIA
You better hope she's a murderer. Otherwise Matt is.

A Palm Springs POLICEWOMAN comes up to them.

POLICEWOMAN
We'd like to ask you to stay in Palm Springs for a few days.

LUCIA
Are we under arrest?

POLICEWOMAN
(shaking her head)
At our expense, of course.

CARL
You must have a nice budget. Carl Tippett. South Bend P.D. Indiana.

POLICEWOMAN
(flirtatious)
Oh. Colleague. Actually we do have a nice little cushion. Not too much crime here. Course we got casinos, drunks, a little drugs. Mostly old people and the gays.

She whispers the words "the gays", but pleasantly.

CARL
Casinos?

POLICEWOMAN
Native Americans... Getting some of their own back, you know what I mean? Looking for a transfer?

Lucia eyes this incipient romance sourly, turns to Bill, who's anxiously watching the police radio. It's all too much for her.

LUCIA
I'm gonna go check in.

No one responds. She heads off to the motel's office...

INT. PALM SPRINGS MOTEL - LUCIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lucia is washing out her underwear in the sink with soap. The TV is ON. She's been crying. She's pissed off and miserable. There's a bottle of booze in a brown paper bag and half a delivery pizza on the chest of drawers. There's a KNOCK on the door.

LUCIA
I said I'm sleeping!

BILL (O.S.)
Come on, Loosh. Let me in.

Lucia rolls her eyes, opens the door.

LUCIA
Oh good. My delivery from 1-800-Pity.

BILL
We shouldn't be alone. Not after the day we had.

LUCIA
Please. I teach America's youth. I can't be thrown by a vibrating corpse. Any news?

BILL
I was down at the station. They found the motorcycle. Sold it. Probably bought a car. They'll find them.

LUCIA
Then I'll sleep well tonight. Where's Carl?

BILL
I don't know. Bed?

He helps himself to some pizza. Lucia is trying to hide her wet underwear laundry from Bill. She catches herself.

LUCIA
Like you give a shit. Like this is incendiary material. Like you're the least bit interested.

BILL
What am I supposed to say?

She dangles her bra in front of him.

LUCIA
I could dance around you naked. Vagina, vagina, vagina. Does that word do <u>anything</u> for you?

BILL
I don't think it does much for anyone, gay or straight. Too formal. Like "expectorate" for spit. Like "dentifrice" for toothpaste.

LUCIA
It's so fucking ironic. You know what my mother said when she found out Tom was gay? "It's such a lonely life." She said that to me, the single straight girl. Is that funny or what? I don't know. I just don't get sex.

BILL
You gotta get out more --

LUCIA
No, no, I don't understand sex, I don't get it, get it? It seems like a lot of trouble for not much. Am I the only one who thinks this?

BILL
I don't think you're the tip of an iceberg, frankly.

LUCIA
You get it. Carl gets it. Christ, even the goddamn Reader's Digest gets it. Look.

She picks up the magazine from the night stand.

LUCIA
"Ten Ways to Keep Sex Alive." This is instead of "I Am Joe's Spleen." The whole world is sex crazy all of a sudden.

BILL
I think it goes back a little further than that.

LUCIA
I'd rather have a back rub. It lasts longer and there's no, you know, fluids. God, what's so great about that? It's like, "Hi. I'd like to blow my nose on your face." You wouldn't like that, would you?

BILL
Yeah, and after they do it, they never phone you.

LUCIA
Or a shampoo. Someone giving you a shampoo, that'd make sense, if you were chasing this asshole all over the country because he gave great shampoos.

BILL
It's not just sex, Lucia. I care about Matt. I used to, anyway.

LUCIA
It's sex, Bill, that's all. You just can't admit it. You want to think you're above it. Nothing that happened happened because you liked sex.

BILL
(a beat)
Tom didn't die because of sex.

LUCIA
Didn't he? P.C. crap aside? Didn't sex kill him? I mean, if he just couldn't get enough shampoos or back rubs, wouldn't he be here today?

BILL
I'm really beat --

LUCIA
Sex kills, that's what you can't accept. Why do you think there are no more Hawaiians? You think they'd bother coming up with the phrase "died in childbirth" if it only happened once? It's fucking dangerous, sex.

BILL
You might as well say I killed him.

LUCIA
(backing off)
He didn't get it from you.

BILL
Only accidentally, is that what you think?

LUCIA
What I think is, fine. Chase this bimbo from Indiana to Chippewa Falls, for all I care. Throw away your reputation, your job, your students -- whatever, because you want Matt. You've got the right. You marched for it and learned the words to "I Am What I Am" and didn't drink Coors for ten years, so go right ahead. Just don't try to tell me it's love, okay? You're an English teacher. Call things by their right name.

It'll be a long time before these two are friends again.

BILL
Okay, fine. Dentifrice. Vagina. And sour fucking grapes. Class dismissed?

He leaves.

LUCIA
Bill!

EXT. MOTEL BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

Carl has been standing there holding a bag from 7-11. Bill brushes past him, slamming the door. Carl looks at him, decides to say nothing. Waits a moment. Knocks on Lucia's door.

THE DOOR OPENS

and Lucia is there, still furious, thinking it's Bill.

CARL
I heard... Anything I can do?

LUCIA
Where's Pepper? Police Woman?

CARL
I don't know. Here. I bought you some beer at the 7-11.
(he hands her a bottle of shampoo; sheepishly)
I needed shampoo.
(off her look)
Are you okay?

LUCIA
Headache.

CARL
I give good neck-rubs.

Suddenly, she grabs him, kisses him hard. He drops the grocery bag; we hear beer fizzing out of breaking bottles. Together they stumble back into the room... Carl kicks the door shut, locking us out. We STAY ON THE CLOSED DOOR for awhile...

DEDEE (V.O.)
Can you believe this? It's so unfair. She spent her whole life being a total pill and this happens to her. We're not going inside. It's too, like, gross. She turned out to be one of those talkers. You know what I mean?
(uninflected)
Do it to me, yeah, oh there, take me home, oh baby.
(back to normal)
Sickening. Oh, here she comes.

LATER

The door opens, Lucia comes out, looking flushed and happy... She picks through the broken bag, finds the bottle of shampoo. Returns happily inside.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Yuck. Meanwhile, I'm like God knows where with Matt, running from the police and trying to get into it, like the girl in "Natural Born Killers", the one who looks like she hasn't spent a whole lot of time vertical.

Meanwhile, CAMERA is turning slowly to the parking lot. Through a TIME DISSOLVE, the parking lot comes to life. Carl and Lucia come downstairs with their suitcases; Bill with his. They talk. Bill goes over to his rental car, drives off. Lucia and Carl watch, then get into Carl's car.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Believe it or not, we didn't get caught. The police were dumber than us, which wasn't easy 'cause Matt insisted on calling the shots. And you know Matt. If opposites really attract, he'll be getting hosed by Albert Einstein any day now.

EXT. SOUTH BEND - BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill's car is being followed by lots of press. There are even more camped out on his front lawn.

DEDEE (V.O.)
It was a bigger story than we figured. Someone in Palm Springs tipped off the local press, and they had a kind of a Welcome Home parade for him.

TV SCREEN

Peter Jennings reports on "SHAME IN THE RUST BELT".

DEDEE (V.O.)
Everything Bill touched was turning to shit. That creep Jason wasn't withdrawing his charges.

TV SCREEN

Now Jason is being interviewed.

JASON
I just don't want this to happen to another kid. If I save one kid from being (CENSORED BEEP), having his (CENSORED BEEP) totally (CENSORED BEEP) till he's (BEEPED), then maybe all this has been worth something. Teachers everywhere have to learn that no means no. At least until we've dropped out.

DEDEE (V.O.)
The school board scheduled a hearing, and the D.A. launched a probe, so to speak.

BOBETTE'S LIVING ROOM

Bobette is watching Jennings talk. Dedee's picture is in the upper right-hand corner.

DEDEE (V.O.)
And my Mom hired a lawyer in Crevecoeur to try to get some money from Bill.

EXT. BOBETTE'S HOUSE, CREVECOEUR - FRONT PORCH - DAY

An impromptu press conference with a visual aid: a poster-sized blown-up picture of Dedee which is a trimmed snapshot.

Obviously Dedee was holding a joint -- there's a snip taken out of the photo there -- and a drink. She's exhaling and laughing. Bobette appears tearful with her shyster lawyer.

DEDEE (V.O.)
And the first day of school back home they brought all these counselors in to help the students deal with their grief over Randy being killed. Nobody remembered what he looked like, but since you could smoke during the grief sessions, plus they brought in outside food, everyone played along...

VARIOUS SHOTS

of teens sobbing, hugging themselves, and eating junk food...

DEDEE (V.O.)
Meanwhile, nobody knew where we were.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Almost all the windows on the bottom floor and some on the second are boarded up with plywood.

EXT. BILL'S BACKYARD - DAY

The rock garden is complete.

EXT. SOUTH BEND CEMETERY - DAY

Bill is sipping some blended whipped coffee drink looking down at a grave. Beside him is a empty duffel bag. He's just finished trimming the gravesite with the rest of the stones that've been hurled through his windows. We read the tombstone: "TOM DALURY. Beloved Companion and Brother. 1962-1994".

A car door slams. Carl heads up the hill, stops beside Bill.

BILL
You following me? Or am I under arrest?

CARL
Ego, ego, ego. Nancy's buried here. Came to pay my respects.
(he looks a moment at Tom's grave)
I thought you had him cremated.

BILL
Half the ashes here, half in the jar.

CARL
That's the beauty of cremation. Spread the wealth. Nice headstone.

BILL
You think so? "Beloved companio ." Sounds like I buried my setter. It was Lucia's idea.

CARL
You like "lover" better? Kind of a lubricant quality to that.
(looking at the plot)
You could use some zinnias.

BILL
Don't go fag on me, man.

CARL
Lucia says hi.

BILL
Hi back.

He tips the rest of his drink over the grave like an offering to the gods, picks up the duffel bag, and heads down to his car. Carl follows.

CARL
I heard you met with Steve Myers. He's a good lawyer.

BILL
He thinks my union's gonna screw me. I heard from the Lambda Legal Defense Fund, though. They want to help -- if I take a lie detector test.

CARL
She really would like to hear from you.

BILL
Message delivered.

CARL
Come on, let's get a cup of coffee. This place gives me the creeps. Like "Our Town", you know? You see it last spring at school? Man, that's sad. You ask me, that's why we got all this teen suicide. Too much "Our Town" for the senior play.

BILL
Don't forget "The Music Man" -- we always lose a few after that. Raincheck on the coffee.

CARL
Come on. Look at you. You look like shit. Admit it. You miss her.

BILL
Hey, Carl. You've been a good friend. Lucia too. But the one I miss is Matt.

CARL
Oh yeah, sure.

BILL
Still makes you a little queasy, huh? You straight boys never quite get over "Deliverance".

CARL
Guess we all tighten up a little when we hear a banjo.

BILL
Wish he were perfect. Wish he were a Tom Hanks/Colin Powell combo platter, make everybody a little happier. But he's not. He's a screw-up who's too naive to be really bad with a knack, a fucking rare knack if you want to know the truth, of making me feel good. When he wasn't pissing me off. But not perfect. I'm not saying I miss someone perfect. You get a perfect one?

CARL
Not so's you'd notice.

BILL
Welcome to the club.

CARL
Pleased to be here.

A moment. They both look out over the cemetery. Then:

BILL
Well. You take care.

He heads down to his car, lugging his duffel of rocks. Carl watches him go.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bill is cleaning out his cubbyhole in the faculty lounge.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Bill carries a box of his belongings through the hallways. He passes Joe, the kid he chastised in the boys bathroom, who's putting up a "Welcome Freshmen" banner. Joe salutes him. Bill nods.

DEDEE (V.O.)
He didn't even have the hearing. The Jason kid disappeared, so the charges were dropped, but Bill resigned anyway. Never loved teaching, not like Robin Williams. School started. People forgot about him. Except you-know-who. The stalker.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

A realtor is hammering a "FOR SALE" sign into Bill's frozen front lawn. PAN OVER TO SEE Lucia's car. She sees this. She waits till the realtor goes, then hurries to the front door, knocks. No answer. She uses her key -- but the locks have been changed.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Gay houses usually sell really quickly because of the recessed lighting and the good faucets. The realtor said the boarded-up windows were the kind of challenge she liked...

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - RIVER - DAY

Bill, wrapped up in an overcoat on the deck, hears the doorbell but doesn't move. Just looks out over the river.

DEDEE (V.O.)
...so it would've ended really differently if we'd waited one or two days more than we did, but we didn't. Which I guess was a good thing, but who knows? It was November.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Just before sunup. A car is idling in front of Bill's house.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Through new glass windows, the masking tape still on them, Bill looks at the tail-lights of the idling car. He picks up a baseball bat, grabs his coat. Under his breath:

BILL
Gimme a break. I'm still in escrow.

He leaves. We SEE NOW that there are packing cartons everywhere.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Bill heads across the frozen grass to the car. There's an "IN ESCROW" banner on the realtor's sign. He reaches the beat-up car, taps on the passenger window with the tip of the bat. Someone leans over, winds down the window. It's Jason.

JASON
Hey, man. How's it going?

BILL
Where the hell have you been? We couldn't hold the hearing.

JASON
I was busy.

BILL
Well, fuck you. And good luck re-filing those charges --

JASON
Hey! That's not why I'm here.

He holds up a cassette.

JASON
Curious?

He opens the car door. After a moment, Bill gets in.

INT. JASON'S CAR - (STATIONARY) - NIGHT

Jason hums the theme from "Mission Impossible", pushes in the cassette into the player, turns up the volume. After a moment:

DEDEE'S VOICE
(tape filter)
Is this on? Okay. Bill? Bill, this is Dedee, your sister. I had to send Jason because of the crime thing. He knows where we're staying. Matt called him one night in Chicago and he's been like, a fairy godfather so to speak -- what? -- he wants me to say faggot godfather -- and anyway, I'm going to have the baby and we need money and you're the only one I know who has money. Like, $10,000.

Bill looks at Jason, who shrugs.

JASON
We got a little wiggle room there.

DEDEE'S VOICE
Because Matt isn't working too regular and neither am I, and we have expenses and this America Online bill, Jason's a computer freak, and so can you please give Jason the money and I'm really really sorry, and so forth... Anyway, if you give us the money Jason has agreed to withdraw all the charges -- Jason, hold up the envelopes now -- inside the envelopes are these letters which are notarized and so forth, so I really think it's a good idea. Plus I'll send you pictures of the baby when it comes out, because it will be your niece or nephew... Okay, turn it off. Oh, also Matt says hi.

The tape ends. Jason turns off the player, dangles the letters in front of Bill.

JASON
So, what do you think?

BILL
Where are they?

JASON
Can't tell you. You just give me the money and that's it.

Bill looks at him, looks as if he's going to agree. But instead he grabs Jason's pierced nipple through his undershirt and twists it. Jason yelps.

JASON
Hey, that's pierced!

BILL
Listen to me, you little grunge faggot. I've survived my family, my schoolyard, every Republican, every other Democrat, Anita Bryant, the Pope, Mel Gibson, the Fucking Christian Coalition, not to mention a real sonofabitch of a virus, in case you haven't noticed, and all that time I was busting my ass so you could do what you want with yours since Paul Lynde and Truman Capote were the only fairies in America, and I'm still standing! I'm still here! So I don't just want your obedience, which I do want, and plenty of it, but I want your fucking gratitude right fucking now, or you'll be looking down a long road at your nipple in the snow, you know what I'm saying? Take me to them.

JASON
Jesus. All right. Come on, let go.

Bill lets him go. Jason brushes the tears from his eyes. Man, that hurt.

JASON
You're supposed to be my brother, man.

BILL
Hey, I was brotherly, man. Think where else you're pierced.

Jason covers his groin with his free hand, pulls out.

EXT. 7-11 STORE - DAY

Bill is in the car rewinding and replaying the tape; Jason's in the store.

Lucia pulls up beside him, goes into the 7-11. She and Bill don't see each other.

INT. 7-11 STORE - DAY

Jason's at the register buying an armful of junk food.

JASON
Oh, man, teriyaki. They just have regular Slim Jims in Canada.

Lucia, getting herself some coffee, sees him, recognizes him.

LUCIA
Jason? Jason Badalian?

CASHIER
Oh my God, yeah. The gay.

JASON
Uh, hey, Ms. Dalury. How you doing?

LUCIA
Never mind about me. I hope you're in town to clear Mr. Macon's name.

JASON
Oh, he never did anything to me, Ms. Dalury. That was just leverage.

LUCIA
Lever -- you're going to march right into school with me, young man, and make a statement to the principal, and then we're going to the police and Detective Tippett will --

JASON
I'm just passing through, ma'am.

LUCIA
You owe him that much!

JASON
Sorry.

He hastily grabs his bag of junk food and leaves.

LUCIA
I should have flunked you when I had the chance!

She turns to look at the cashier, a young girl she also taught.

CASHIER
His skin cleared up though, Ms. Dalury.

INT./EXT. JASON'S CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jason jumps in, hands Bill his coffee, starts the car quickly.

BILL
You paid, didn't you? You didn't --

JASON
Fucking small town, man...

INT. 7-11 STORE - DAY

Lucia watches Jason's car pull out, trying to read the license plate. She freezes as she gets a glimpse of Jason's passenger. Bill doesn't see her. A moment, then she turns to the Cashier.

LUCIA
Call the school, tell 'em I'm sick.
(as the girl hesitates)
Do it!

And Lucia runs to her car, dumping her coffee as she goes.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE PURSUIT

Jason's car, followed discreetly by Lucia's wagon, heads east out of South Bend and then north into Michigan, towards and through Detroit, crossing into Canada, heading towards Toronto.

It's late afternoon when Jason's car finally turns down a country road 30 miles from Toronto.

EXT. CANADIAN COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Jason's driving down this dirt road.

JASON
As soon as the baby's born, we go to Mexico. Me, Matt, and the kid.
(off Bill's look)
Dedee met this guy on AOL. So, you know... the baby's available.

BILL
Matt's not straight anymore?

JASON
Hey, he called me, didn't he?

BILL
Yeah, he did.

The road dead-ends in front of a two-story summer cabin.

JASON
We got it cheap because of the season.

BILL
Send Matt out first.

JASON
Boy. She's gonna kill me when she sees you. Don't tell her you don't have the money till later, okay?

Off Bill's look, he gets out of the car, heads into the house. Bill gets out to stretch his legs. He starts coming closer to the house when he hears:

DEDEE (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing here?

He turns around to see Dedee, eight-and-a-half months pregnant, carrying a bundle of kindling she's been gathering.

BILL
Jesus, Dedee -- God, you're huge.

DEDEE
Jason!

Jason pops his head out of the front door of the cabin.

JASON
Oh, hey Deed. We're back. He wanted to see you himself. Family, you know.

DEDEE
Asshole! Go in and help Matt get dinner. I'll handle him.

Jason nods, goes back inside the cabin.

BILL
You'll handle me? Did you really think I'd just load up his car with cash and point it north?

DEDEE
You're screwing it all up.

BILL
When are you due? What's the doctor say?

DEDEE
We can't afford a doctor -- didn't you listen to the tape?

BILL
Come on, you're coming home with me --

DEDEE
Right. Look, I'm fine. There's this pre-natal forum on AOL. I do everything but the acupuncture. Jason's nuts for that internet stuff. Matt too. I didn't know fairies liked computers so much. Must be because you can't type faggy, you know what I mean? So people don't know and they can start off liking you... You didn't bring any money at all?

BILL
(sitting down)
Forget the money.

DEDEE
It's not for me -- it's for them. Part of it, anyway. Did he tell you they're going to Mexico?

BILL
And you're giving them the baby as some kind of a wedding gift? Cause who needs another blender, right?

DEDEE
I gotta get Matt's name on the certificate. They'll take my word for it, right? Once he's the father he can take the kid anywhere.

BILL
Just give it away?

DEDEE
It's his just as much as mine. At least that's the line I'm going to take.

BILL
Dedee, come on. You can't live like this. It's crazy. If you want to give up your baby, there are agencies. You got to be reasonable. Besides... you're wanted for murder back home.

DEDEE
For questioning. I don't want to talk about it.

BILL
I could turn you over to the police right now. Not could, should.

DEDEE
I'm your sister, okay? God. Plus I made Jason take back everything he said in those letters. They'll get the cops off your back. Thanks to me.

From behind them:

MATT (O.S.)
Hey, Bill!

Bill turns, sees Matt at the doorway. His face is flushed; his shirt unbuttoned. He slaps away the hands of an unseen Jason behind him, then he waves Bill inside, smiling.

MATT
(to Jason, smiling)
Cut it out, man.
(to Bill)
Hungry?

Dedee turns to Bill, shrugs.

DEDEE
It's the life cycle of the American bisexual. He's in the last stage. Total 'mo.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Having parked her wagon, Lucia creeps forward slowly, circles the cabin.

HER POV - CABIN

Inside, Dedee, Matt, Jason and Bill are finishing dinner. Matt and Jason are having words.

BACK TO LUCIA

She's starving, her mouth watering. Then she stumbles, hides quickly as:

EXT. CABIN - PORCH - NIGHT

Bill and Matt come out with their coffee.

MATT
He's such a jerk sometimes.

BILL
He's always been nice to me, you know. In between filing charges.

MATT
That's what I mean. Jerk.

BILL
(hopeful)
Sounds like a volatile relationship.

MATT
Yeah. You mean, like, in bed it doesn't matter who's on top?

BILL
That's versatile. Volatile means you fight a lot.

MATT
All the time.

BILL
Think that'll be good for the kid?

MATT
Everyone fights.
(a suspicion)
Oh. You don't believe in gay parents.

BILL
It's not politics, Matt. It's a kid's life.

MATT
(about to go inside)
You know what? Good night.

Bill touches his arm.

BILL
Hey. Hey. Come on. What are you angry about?

MATT
You piss me off. You always did.

BILL
No, I didn't. You were never pissed off.

MATT
If you say so.

BILL
I should be pissed off! You leave me in Palm Springs with the police and the body of that poor kid --

MATT
It was an accident. They were struggling and the gun went off. It's made her very anti-handgun.

BILL
-- you disappear for months, months. Not a word. Nothing to let me know you were alive.

MATT
Sorry.

BILL
Course, I don't know why I'm surprised. It's not like I could expect, you know, loyalty or consideration or whatever from you.

MATT
Hey, I told you, I didn't sleep with Jason when I was with you. I just cheated with Dedee there at the end.

BILL
Oh. Well, phew.

MATT
I know it was wrong. But I wasn't happy, Bill. I'm happy with Jason.

BILL
How? I mean... he's not on your level, you know.

MATT
That's what Lucia used to say about me.

BILL
Ah, come on, Matt, admit it. This thing between you and Jason is just sex --

MATT
-- yeah, and that stuff you're breathing is just oxygen --

BILL
It's just an itch. You scratch it, you feel better. We had something more.

MATT
I don't know. It's just... when I think about it, I can't make sex not important. It's kind of made my life for me. It's not like I like baked potatoes and they like mashed. It's bigger than that. Who I like to be with, what I like to do. It's who I am.

BILL
Okay. Take off your shirt.
(off Matt's look)
Experiment. Take it off. I'm not going to touch you.

Matt unbuttons his shirt, opens it so Bill can see his chest.

MATT
What'd you do with the Polaroids?

BILL
Look at you.

He turns him to face the window. Matt can see his reflection in it.

BILL
It's a body, that's all. There's nothing personal about it, there's nothing Matt about it. You don't even work out for it. It's just a package. It hides what's inside, what's really personal. That's what I wanted.

MATT
I don't think I get more personal than my own nipples.

He buttons up his shirt, puts some distance between them.

BILL
There's more to you than that.

MATT
Yeah, but there's at least that. Look, Bill. You think too much. You wanted me. I was fine with that -- to me it was flattering. I'm stupid enough I took it personally. But it wasn't enough for you. You had to like make it bigger or something. Make it spiritual or mental or something, like that's some kind of promotion.

BILL
Oh. So there's nothing more to you than the body?

MATT
What the fuck do I know? I'm just saying, if you say you're love with my mind, hey, I know that's not my best feature. So where does that leave me? Not only do I have a fool for a boyfriend, so does he. You follow me?

BILL
You're not a fool.

MATT
You know what I'm not? Tom.

BILL
Who said --

MATT
Sorry he's dead. I don't know much about heaven or stuff. But wherever he is, I don't think he cares that we screwed around? Or feels better because you moved me in and told everyone it was more than sex --

BILL
You don't know --

MATT
-- He died and it really sucked and you don't get to make it better by living a certain way and being this great guy who likes the insides of people. He was still robbed, and you were too. Even Lucia, who I could care less about.

BILL
Couldn't care less. Sorry.

MATT
Maybe Jason can drive you back tomorrow.

BILL
Maybe so.

MATT
Okay. Good night. You look cute, kind of all stupid-like.

He leans in, kisses Bill lightly on the mouth. Bill kisses him back, not so lightly. Matt smiles, goes into the house.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Can I just say to all the girls out there, if you're sitting next to a guy who groaned or made some crack during that little kiss, you're with what we call a closet case. That's the number one tip-off. Number two is if they freak out about gays in the military -- you know, if they can't discuss it without giggling about showering with gays and bending over for soap and shit... That's not good. Straight men don't think about wet naked men all that much, if you ask me.

Bill sinks down, sits on the top step, rests his head on his arms. Then he hears someone sniffling. He goes to the end of the porch and sees Lucia. He's stunned. His mouth opens and he does some fish moves with it.

BILL
Lucia? What -- ?

Lucia looks up. She's been crying. She dries up quick.

LUCIA
Oh, God. I'm sorry. It was that stuff about Tom.

BILL
How'd you get here?

LUCIA
I followed you guys from the 7-11. I kept thinking you were gonna pull over and I could, you know, jump out and protect you.

BILL
I wasn't too protected.

LUCIA
So I heard. What do we do now?

BILL
I'm gonna stay for a couple days. See if I can convince her to have the baby in the States. Drag Jason back to make a statement to the board. Like I give a shit.

She starts crying again.

BILL
What? Come on, stop that.

He has to go over, sit down beside her, put his arm around her.

LUCIA
Are you just never going to call me again?

BILL
I don't need to. You can just keep tailing me.

LUCIA
Matt thinks it was just sex too, so I'm not completely off.

BILL
Yeah, but he has a higher opinion of sex than you do.

LUCIA
You mean used to.

BILL
Congratulations.

LUCIA
Congratulate Carl. I'm not gonna say I'm sorry. Because I did already in that letter you didn't read.

BILL
I read it. I'm sorry too -- about the sour grapes thing. Are you gonna come in?

LUCIA
(shaking her head)
I'm gonna head back. Gotta call Carl.

BILL
You want to use the phone?

LUCIA
I just want to tell him everything's okay. I mean, it is okay, isn't it?

BILL
Yeah, Lucia. It's okay.

Suddenly, THEY HEAR A SCREAM from an upstairs window. Lights come on, throwing rectangles of yellow on the lawn. Bill and Lucia look at each other, then run into the house.

INT. CABIN - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Bill and Lucia run upstairs. They see Jason in the hallway.

JASON
Jesus! Oh, Ms. Dalury -- what are you --

LUCIA
Never mind. Call 911 -- do they have 911 here?

They run into:

INT. DEDEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dedee is scared now. There's blood on the sheets. She's sweating and nervous. Matt's with her.

DEDEE
Shit, shit, shit...

MATT
It's okay, it's okay, we're getting a doctor --

DEDEE
What the fuck is she doing here?

MATT
Lucia?

LUCIA
Go help Jason -- find out how fast they can get an ambulance here. What happened?

DEDEE
I don't know. I was asleep. Look at the blood --

LUCIA
You're not hemorrhaging, okay? Are you having contractions?

DEDEE
No, this is my sleepy face, what the fuck do you think?

BILL
(yelling out the door)
Matt -- what's going on?

MATT (O.S.)
We can't reach them.

BILL
Do you know where the hospital is?

DEDEE
Yeah. I had bleeding once before.

BILL
We'll take Jason's car.

LUCIA
Mine's bigger.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Bill is carrying Dedee out to the car; Matt running next to her with a bag. Jason's behind the wheel of his car; Lucia's behind hers, the motor running, the lights on. Matt opens the hatchback of Lucia's car. They put Dedee in gently. Matt starts to crawl in after her.

DEDEE
Bill.

Bill nods, crawls in beside her. Matt closes the hatchback. Jason yells out his window:

JASON
Do they have credit cards? They won't take her without money!

Matt runs over to Jason's car.

MATT
Yeah, it's cool. Let's go.
(calling back to Lucia)
Follow us!

The two cars pull off.

INT. LUCIA'S WAGON - BACK - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Bill and Dedee together. Dedee winces when the car hits a pothole.

LUCIA
Sorry!

BILL
You okay?

Dedee, in too much pain to be smart, nods, takes his hand when he offers it.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The two cars barrel down the road. Another car comes toward them.

INT. LUCIA'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Lucia sees the lights of the other car approaching.

LUCIA
Is that the ambulance?

The car passes them.

LUCIA'S POV - THE OTHER DRIVER

is Carl. He looks almost as surprised as they are.

BACK TO SCENE

Lucia is shocked; so is Bill, who's seen it too.

LUCIA
How the hell...

BILL
Keep driving.

Behind her we see (in reverse) the decal for "Lo-Jack Automobile Theft Tracking System"...

EXT. CANADIAN ROAD - NIGHT

Carl's car makes a three-point turn, starts to follow Lucia and Jason's car...

INT. CANADIAN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

First Jason, then Lucia, then Carl pull up into Emergency. Everyone gets out of their cars in the off-loading zone, over the protests of the Emergency Room staff.

CARL
What the hell are you doing here!

BILL
Excuse me.

He gets a wheelchair. Lucia comes around from the front of the car.

LUCIA
Why are you following me?

MATT
Is there a doctor here? Excuse me? Are you a doctor?

Carl sees Jason. His eyes pop.

CARL
You little shit --

JASON
Be cool, man. We're in Canada.

Bill helps Dedee out of the car into the wheelchair.

LUCIA
Matt -- go tell them inside.

CARL
What's going on?

DEDEE
Bring my bag!

They rush into the E.R.

INT. E.R. - TRIAGE - NIGHT

Lucia, Matt, Jason, Bill, Dedee, Carl -- and a NURSE filling out a form.

NURSE
Dedee Macon. Is the father here?

MATT
Probably.

DEDEE
Matt!

MATT
Yes. I am. I'm the father.

JASON
I'm the father's boyfriend.

Dedee moans, and the floor is splattered with blood. Jason looks at it and falters, about to faint. Bill notices.

BILL
Matt?

MATT
Shit! Jason!

BILL
Go ahead, go ahead, take care of him.
(off the Nurse's look)
I'm her brother.

NURSE
And you?

BILL
She's family.

LUCIA
I'm Tom's sister.

CARL
She's my fiancée.

Everyone stops short. Looks at Lucia.

DEDEE
You're kidding.

LUCIA
It's not for sure. We're talking about it. Privately.

BILL
(to Carl)
Why didn't you tell me last week?

LUCIA
You saw him last week? You didn't tell me.

From the side, Jason's just been told by Matt.

JASON
Hey, Ms. Dalury, that's great.

NURSE
Who's Tom?

DEDEE
Hey, what do I have to do? Bleed from the eyes. Come on, deliver me!

NURSE
We have a procedure here...

Suddenly Dedee starts screaming -- a loud, impressive wail, and the Nurse drops her clipboard, shouts out a code blue! Everyone's astonished.

MATT
That sounds like it really smarts.

BILL
Where do I take her?

NURSE
(to an orderly)
George! Four.

George begins to wheel off Dedee. Lucia, Matt, Jason, Carl, and Bill start to follow.

NURSE
Only one of you goes with her!

BILL
Dedee?

Dedee looks up at Bill, nods. Bill turns to the others.

BILL
I'll let you know.

INT. E.R. EXAMINING ROOM - NIGHT

A young doctor looks at Dedee.

DOCTOR
Jesus, it's crowning.

DEDEE
What does that mean?

BILL
He can see the head.

DEDEE
Duh. It's huge. He could see it from space.

BILL
Aren't you supposed to be breathing?

DEDEE
Oh, that's better. It's over. Jesus.

BILL
Is this normal?

DOCTOR
Yeah, sure, sure.

He looks nervous. As he and the nurses confer...

BILL
Wow. You're having a baby.

DEDEE
Yeah. Lucky me.

BILL
Uncle Bill.

DEDEE
Dad's first grandchild.

BILL
Wow.

DEDEE
I don't remember much about him.

BILL
You were five.

DEDEE
He liked these shirts. Made of like nylon or something -- you know the kind I mean?

BILL
Ban-Lon. He was the Ban-Lon king.

DEDEE
They didn't breathe, you know. He'd mow the lawn in them and really stink. Not much to hold onto. He wore plastic and stank.

BILL
We'll call your mom if you want after this.

DEDEE
No. Bill...

BILL
Is another one coming?

DEDEE
Is that my bag?

She points to a chair where her coat and bag lie.

BILL
You need something?

DEDEE
Bring it here.

He does. She opens it, takes out a baggie of ashes.

DEDEE
Tom.

Bill looks at the ashes. He nods.

DEDEE
Every single bit of him's there. I double-bagged it.

BILL
Yeah.

DEDEE
It was pretty fucking low. Just so you know I know. I wouldn't want that on my conscience. Like I have one.

BILL
You don't have to tell me that now, okay? Everything's gonna be fine.

DEDEE
It's Randy's baby. Randy --

She starts panting now, feeling the contraction coming.

BILL
I know it was an accident. You don't have to tell me anything. Everything's going to be fine.

DEDEE
I don't want you to think I'm never thinking about Randy.

BILL
I don't think that. Shhh.

The contraction arrives. Dedee looks at Bill, panic in her eyes. He holds onto her.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Excuse me, but haven't we seen this scene like a million times before? I pant and swear and I'm like, you know, pissed off, women delivering are always pissed off and asking for that shot, that epidural or whatever, and swearing at the man who got them into it, etc., and the husband's holding the video camera -- we don't have one here, but other than that it's pretty standard. So I gotta give you something else to watch and you feel free to go back and forth.

SPLIT SCREEN: DEDEE'S DELIVERY AND --

INT. EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Jason is sitting with a wastebasket in front of him; Matt is feeding a dollar bill into a vending machine. It spits it back. He feeds it in again.

Lucia and Carl are sitting together, having a fight. Carl's watching Matt trying to get the vending machine to accept his bill.

CARL
How long is he gonna keep doing that?

LUCIA
I'm sorry, okay? There wasn't time to pull over.

CARL
What's the point, Lucia?

LUCIA
The point of what?

CARL
What's the point of sleeping with you if it doesn't get your attention? If I always come second to Bill?

LUCIA
Excuse me?

CARL
The point of sex is not recreation or procreation or any of that stuff. It's concentration. It's supposed to focus your attention on the person you're sleeping with. That's what it's for. It's like biological highlighter. Otherwise, there's just too many people in the world.

LUCIA
Just because I sleep with you, I don't care about anyone else?

CARL
Look for me first in any crowded room. Yeah. And I do likewise.

LUCIA
This rule's written down somewhere?

CARL
Otherwise I find someone else to sleep with.

A beat.

LUCIA
It's a habit, thinking of Bill. Because of Tom.

CARL
I know.

LUCIA
So if you come first --

CARL
And you come first with me --

LUCIA
Where does the kid come?

CARL
What kid?

LUCIA
Maybe you better leave all that shit about the purpose of sex to someone more qualified.

CARL
You're pregnant?

LUCIA
And let me tell you something, honey. It ain't Bill's.

He grabs her, kisses her...

SPLIT-SCREEN ENDS:

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

During the previous scene, Dedee's labor has progressed. Now the baby's being born.

DOCTOR
It's a boy!

Dedee collapses on the pillows. Bill leans in to her.

BILL
He's beautiful, Dedee. He's a beautiful boy.

DEDEE
Yeah? Do me a favor.
(her eyes close)
Count his balls.

Bill smiles -- but he doesn't like the look on Dedee's face. She's white. Suddenly, he hears a SPLASHING SOUND.

QUICK CUT

Blood is spilling onto the tile floor. Dedee's hemorrhaging.

BACK TO SCENE

BILL
Doctor!

But the team is already on it. Controlled urgency... Bill is shoved to one side...

BILL
Dedee! Dedee!

But she is white, still...

INT. EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - NIGHT (M.O.S.)

Lucia, Carl, Jason, Matt look up as Bill comes in from the examining room. His clothes are covered with blood. He looks lost. Lucia stands, goes to him. Matt asks him what happened; Jason pulls Matt's head onto his shoulder.

DEDEE (V.O.)
What a bummer. Didn't think I could die, did you? Look at them. Who'd'a thought they gave a shit? Even the bitch, look at her. Unless she's crying for Bill, not me. Contact grief. No, I think it's for me. Look at Bill. I did nothing but fuck up his life. I knew Matt liked me. Look at Jason. He's got a boner, believe it or not. Drama queen. And like these guys, some of you guys ended up liking me. Thought maybe, just maybe I wasn't a total shit.
(beat)
But you were wrong. I'm fucking with you right now. No way I died. I could have, that much is true. River of blood, that happened. But they stopped it.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - EXAMINING ROOM - NIGHT

The doctors stop the flow of blood. Bill fights his way back to Dedee's side. Her eyes flicker open. She sees Bill, smiles, closes her eyes again.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - WAITING AREA - NIGHT

As before, except Bill comes in bloody but smiling.

BILL
Baby boy.

Jason and Matt slap hands.

BILL
Ten pounds, two ounces.

LUCIA
Yeah, it's yours, Matt. That's a preemie all right.

Amid the general rejoicing, Bill has put his hands over his face. Carl comes over to him. Puts an arm on his shoulder.

CARL
You okay, buddy?

BILL
Fine. Yeah. Long year.

He catches Lucia's eye. A beat, then:

JASON
I'm glad she didn't die and all but man. She's what I call a real user.

INT. CANADIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dedee is holding her baby, trying not to like it. Matt and Jason gather around her, cooing over the baby. We PULL BACK TO SHOW two Canadian policemen outside Dedee's hospital room door chatting with Carl.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Giving up the baby was the easy part. Just looking at that soft spot made me want to scream. Creep-a-rama. And I knew Matt'd be a good father. He'd given up a lot for the baby already, you know? I just made him promise not to go to Hawaii and marry Jason. I think once homos can marry then what's so great about being normal?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucia joins Carl. Embraces him. They walk off arm in arm, followed by Matt and Jason. One of the policemen follows Matt; the other stays at his post outside the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Bill stares out the window, the baby asleep in his arms. Dedee looks at him. She's struggling with a breast pump.

DEDEE (V.O.)
So everybody ended up happy except me and Bill. Which is probably genetic from our loser dad who spent his life chasing his dick and ended up, you know, sitting around holding it.

EXT. POLICE CARS CONVOY INTO U.S. FROM CANADA - DAY

Dedee's in one car; Matt's in another; Lucia, Jason, and Carl follow in their cars...

DEDEE (V.O.)
Carl gets us to return to the States, so he's like, Super Cop. Matt and I have to go out to Palm Springs and answer all these questions about Randy. Matt gets off scot-free.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Dedee, in a prison jumpsuit, opening a package from Lucia -- books on "Getting Your High School Degree At Home".

DEDEE (V.O.)
Me, they put in jail for six months for leaving the scene of a crime or something, even though they agreed it wasn't murder or they couldn't prove it. Especially since Randy had left these really crazy writings in the room about Satan and stuff, so that looked good for me. Bill worked it so my probation time was spent at his place in Indiana. Breaking escrow cost him a shitload.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Roger drives up; there's a sign over the front door: "WELCOME BACK MR. MACON."

DEDEE (V.O.)
Jason made this statement that he'd been paid to make his charges by the Christian Right guys on the school board, the ones against evolution and Huck Finn, which was a total lie but even so they won't be back for another term. Plus all these gay legal people came down from Chicago and made this huge stink, and the school board begged Bill to come back to work...

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Baby party. Dedee grimaces as she looks in the crib.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Lucia and Carl had their baby. Phew. You can imagine the pick of that litter. It was the kind of kid if you played with it too much after a feeding, you threw up. But they loved it. Even the bitch on the Home Shopping Network sent a gift.

Lucia opens a gift box. It's a Scarlett O'Hara doll whose hoop skirt conceals an extra roll of toilet paper.

EXT. MEXICO - DAY

Matt's painting a house; little Randy is playing on the porch. Jason swings a camera up to frame Randy.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Little Randy was beautiful, especially when the soft spot grew together. I almost took him back when I found out they pierced his ear but what are you gonna do? Gays will be gays, except when they're bi for awhile.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The same photograph on the refrigerator. We pull back to show Bill and Dedee getting dinner ready.

DEDEE (V.O.)
And I'm like supposed to hang here with my brother until I'm 18. Just the two of us. With once-a-week visits from an officer of the court.

Dedee's PAROLE OFFICER enters with a briefcase. Dedee gives him a sour smile. Bill puts down his wooden spoon and gives the guy (who's cute) a big, open-mouthed kiss.

DEDEE (V.O.)
It wasn't once-a-week for long.

INT. DEDEE'S BEDROOM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dedee packs, checks herself in the mirror, scribbles a note.

DEDEE (V.O.)
It's not that I'm against sex -- except where it gets creepy and involves a Scout leader or a clown. And I mean, it was clever of God or evolution or whatever to hook the survival of the species to it.

She passes through the hallway, past Bill's half-open door, down the stairways which are covered with clothing thrown off in passion. She leaves the note on top of some Calvin Kleins.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Because we're gonna screw around no matter what. It was a smarter thing to pick, than, say, the instinct to share your toys or like, return phone calls. We'd've died out like eons ago. Before fossils. But on the minus side... God. All the attachment that goes with it. It's like a net. Sex always ends in kids or diseases or like, you know. Relationships. That's exactly what I don't want. I want the opposite of all that, whatever that is.

INT. BILL'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Dedee throws her bag in the back of the car, gets in.

DEDEE (V.O.)
So I'm out of here. I'm going to go someplace where there's no sex at all. Like where that Gingrich guy hangs out. Or Utah. I'm over it.

Her car passes a hitchhiker. We stay on the hitchhiker, who's cute, young, maybe 18. Non-threatening. He's depressed since the car passed him. Then his face brightens as it stops, backs up. He opens the door, looks in, smiles. He gets in the car. It starts off.

DEDEE (V.O.)
Come on people. It's a long way to Utah. You think I'm the car bingo type?
(to the guy in the car)
So what's your feeling about gays in the military?

HITCHIKER (V.O.)
Excuse me?

MUSIC COMES UP as her car zooms off and we...

FADE OUT:

THE END